

Socialist Review

of Aotearoa/New Zealand

For a socialist and democratic alternative

Number Three Autumn 2000 \$ 1

**After 15 Years of Market
Madness ...**

WE Sacked National

- Now fight for REAL CHANGE

***in our workplaces and unions, on the campuses,
in the streets...***

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What we say...

■ **Our rulers tell us we live in a democracy.** But when you look at the society we live in, it becomes clear that the majority have very little say in how things are run. We get a chance to vote **once every three years**. But in between elections, we have almost no control over what a government does, nor can we hold them to the promises they were elected on. Even more importantly, all the people with the real power in this system, the ones who get to make the truly important decisions, are unelected. The C.E.Os of big corporations decide what is produced and who gets employed. Your boss at the supermarket, your principal at high school or the administrators of your university have far more power over what happens in your daily life than the Prime Minister. But democracy, as they delight in telling us at school, is "rule by the majority", right? When was the last time you saw any of these people consulting the majority? As socialists, we're arguing for a new form of democracy. A real democracy, where ordinary people control every aspect of their lives : a democracy which is economic as well as political.

■ **We're struggling for a world where the people who make the wealth in society control it, where workers decide what and how much our society needs.** In other words, we want decisions to be made after considering human need, instead of just the slavish pursuit of profit for a tiny minority. All around the world, people are divided into two main groups. There is the tiny minority who gain huge profits by their control of industry, both private and public. Then there is the vast majority of the population, who suffer for this minority's pursuit of profit and wealth, things they seem to value far more than human life and happiness.

■ **Something is rotten in the state of capitalism...** Not only is this world clearly undemocratic, its stuffing up in a big way. In New Zealand successive neo-liberal governments have cut benefits, attacked the powers of unions, and

raised barriers to tertiary education through so-called "user pays" approaches to fees. The world environment is being mercilessly exploited, with whole species becoming extinct, ancient rainforests reduced to stock piles of disposable chopsticks and deforestation causing massive flooding and erosion. Around the world the difference between rich and poor has become greater. Racism and neo-Nazi movements are increasing in popularity throughout Europe. Drug abuse, depression and alienation from work, poverty, crime and violence are all the expressions of a system focused on its own goals - profit and production, instead of the interest of the majority who are subject to them. Things are getting worse. There have been more wars since 1945 than during the entire course of history. The "Third World", filled with starving millions while in the United States grain is dumped because it is not profitable, could be fed several times over with only a fraction of the money spent by governments on war and weapons. The family unit remains the main place of aggression and violence towards women.

■ **Reform?** History has shown us that the movements for reform cannot change the essential nature of capitalism. Often they increase the powers of the very people who oppress the unemployed, students and workers - think of the Fourth Labour Government! **Capitalism is a system which is rotten to the core** - and so tinkering with its external aspects will not help cure the ailments which are an essential part of it. **That's why socialists argue for revolution.** We will be able to stop capitalism only by overthrowing it, by the vast majority seizing power, and the physical mechanics of power, off the greedy minority. Those systems which are designed to keep the bulk of people under control - the army, police and courts - will be abolished and rearranged democratically. There are many historical examples - from Russia in 1917, France in 1968 through to Poland in 1980 - which show that this dramatic course of events is possible. Revolution is no dream, it is a state

the chaos of capitalism encourages.

■ **Eyes on the Prize:** Having accepted this does not mean that socialists sit around and wait for the barricades to appear from nowhere. The best way to achieve radical social movements, and revolutionary activity, is to become involved in the day to day struggles of workers and students. **"Revolutionaries make the best reformists"** because we argue for policies of direct confrontation with those in power - occupations, strikes, pickets - to achieve change, in direct contrast to the letter-writing and "within the system" actions of reformists. Socialists support all workers in their struggles for improved pay, conditions and workplace environments, and we think the best way to do this is to exercise the power we have as the majority. The bosses need willing employees to work their capital - the strike threatens this. A University needs a functioning Registry to be administered - hard to do when hundreds of angry students are demanding redress of their fees from within the building!!

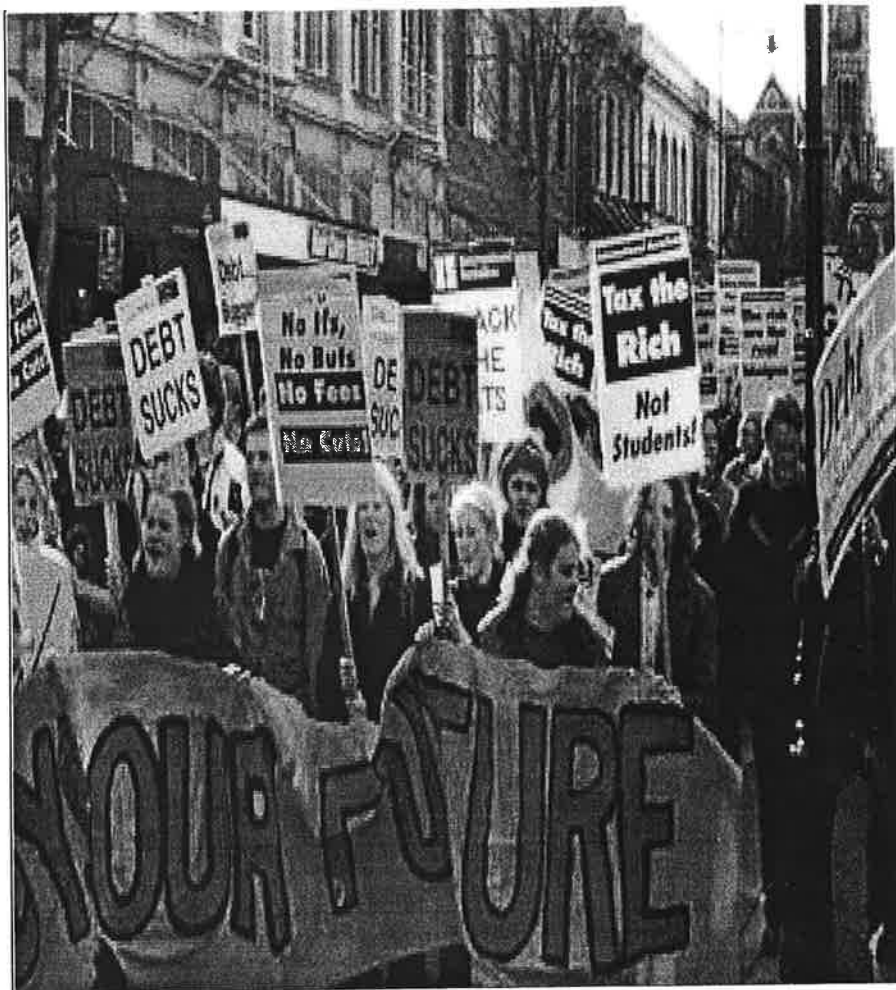
■ **Capitalism loves divisions.** It serves the interests of those with the power to see the rest of us divided against ourselves. Working class men benefit from working women's liberation. Maori, Pakeha and workers' of other ethnicities have far more power united than they do divided. Socialists support women in their fight for liberation from sexual objectification, violence and economic disempowerment. We don't agree with the pessimistic notion currently fashionable that sexism is an inherent part of man/woman relations. For socialists, the struggle for woman's liberation is linked with the struggle for worker liberation. We support Maori in their struggle for genuine Tino Rangitiritanga, and argue for gay and lesbian liberation based not on liberal notions of "tolerance", but rather on the idea that all human sexuality should be free and celebrated.

■ **We're making the case for revolution tomorrow, and joining in the struggle for change today.** The International

continued from p.2...

Socialists meet regularly to discuss our ideas, and to debate both theoretical issues - of Marxism, socialism and our roles - as well as to plan how to get involved in daily movements. We become involved in local disputes in our area, and try to convince others of the value of direct, confrontational actions. We publish this magazine to spread our ideas. We are a small group, but a group determined to actually get stuff done in the labour and students' movements, and to do what we can for radical change.

If you're angry at the injustice, the unfairness, the cruelty and the waste that is a central part of both our society and the system of the world, don't just sit at home and get depressed alone. Join the International Socialists, and become involved in a movement to change it, while meeting like-minded people in the process.



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Socialist Review Aotearoa is different from the capitalist media - we don't pretend to be unbiased or hide behind some strange notion of "objectivity" to present our arguments as absolute truth. This magazine is designed to give the viewpoint of the majority of the people, not just to tell you what those who control the media (i.e. the ruling class with lots of influence and money) want you to hear. We argue the case for revolution and give the viewpoint of every struggle against this tired and tawdry system.

The flip-side of this is that, again unlike the mainstream media, we don't have big business bankrolling us so that we'll say the right things. In fact, we don't have anyone bankrolling us. That's why we need you support. We want to expand *Socialist Review Aotearoa*,

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Blast from the Past - 1993 Fees Campaign

The IS grew in conjunction with the fees campaign. A large section of the student population became increasingly radicalized through successful marches and mass occupations on the 1st of July (Budget day occupation of the National Party offices), the 3rd of August (occupation of the Registry), and the protest and attempted occupation of the Registry on the 28th of September. As members of the IS we did what we could to provide some guidance and direction for the campaign and to contribute to it in a practical way. We organized meetings around the campaign, we used our posters to advertise the protests, we helped to distribute leaflets, and so on.

All of this work paid off. Otago University emerged as the most radicalized (and united) campus in the country during 1993. The Registry protest on the 28th of September attracted national media attention and provided inspiration for students and workers to continue the struggle against attacks by the National Government.

Our involvement in the fees campaign also paid off for the IS. By acting in a constructive and non-sectarian manner we won respect from those who were most actively involved in the fees campaign. It was common to hear people say that while they may not agree with everything that we stand for, they thought that we had made an important contribution to the fees campaign.

The victory of Labour and the Alliance was greeted with both delight and relief by New Zealand students, workers, disabled and the unemployed. But can the Labour/Alliance government bring real change? Do they even plan to? - Brian Roper investigates.

When Labour, Alliance and the Greens won a majority of seats in the 1999 election, we were all happy to see National and ACT out of power. National dominated governments had ruled in the interests of the rich throughout the 1990s. And National and ACT were promising to take the New Right policy agenda much further...

The majority of New Zealanders experienced falling real incomes, brought about by the Employment Contracts Act which made it much harder for our unions to organize and fight for better wages and conditions, the 1991 benefit cuts, and rising tertiary education fees. At the same time National continued with the fourth Labour Government's policy of cutting taxes for the rich. In view of all this it is hardly surprising that inequality increased at a faster rate and to a greater extent in New Zealand during the 1990s than any other advanced capitalist society. The overall effect of the New Right policy agenda was to make the bottom 80% much worse off, the top 20% much better off (see pages 10-15 in this issue).

No matter how often that National, ACT, the Employers' Federation and the Business Roundtable told us that these policies were good for us, our own experiences suggested otherwise. So in the 1999 general election a clear majority 'sacked the Nats'. The mood was that it was 'time for a change' in the direction of more 'caring' policies. The hope was that Labour, the Alliance and the Greens would bring a change.

The Promises

Labour was careful not to promise much at all in the run up to the election. And the Alliance didn't promise much more. Essentially what they did promise was the following:

- A less hard-line monetarist approach to managing the economy, with more state intervention to 'get the economy going'.

- More government regulation of business, particularly of those big

Labour Alliance Greens

companies who have effective monopolies (for example electricity supply companies like Contact).

- A more generous approach to social policy, with more money for health, the removal of interest repayments on student debt while students are still studying, the scrapping of the reforms to education outlined in the Tertiary Review, the renationalisation of ACC, and slight increases in benefits and super.

- A small tax increase for those on incomes of \$60,000 plus.

- The dumping of the Employment Contracts Act and its replacement with legislation that provides for 'good faith' bargaining and industrial action in support of multi-employer contracts.

Since being in power the Government has taken some steps towards implementing these policies. But already it is clear that the tax increases are hollow in that high income earners are exempt from paying the higher rate if they contribute to super-annuation schemes. The approach to managing the economy differs little from the previous government. And the key features of National's education policies remain in place.

In fact, overall all we have is a slight modification of the New Right policy agenda, implemented between 1984 and 1999, disguised with (admittedly refreshing) leftish sounding rhetoric from Helen Clarke and Jim Anderton.

We in the International Socialist argued that people should 'vote Alliance without illusions' in the run-up to the election. We did so because we wanted to see National and ACT out, but at the same time we said vote them out without having illusions that Labour and the Alliance would rebuild the welfare state (to make it resemble the welfare state of the 1935-1984 period) let alone bring about real change.

We wish that Labour and the Alliance really would scrap the New Right policies of 'Rogernomics' and National. But they will not. They are reformist parties - profoundly committed to managing the existing capitalist system rather than changing it.

Real Change Through Parliament?

The historical reality is that fundamental, as opposed to minor, change has not come through parliament. No reformist government in any country in the last 150 years

has successfully overcome the fundamental problems which are generated by capitalism: class inequality, unemployment, alienation within the workplace, women's oppression, racism and the destruction of the natural environment.

In fact, reformist governments have repeatedly adopted policies which have had precisely the opposite effect (eg the 1984-1990 Labour Government in New Zealand, the Hawke-Keating Government in Australia, the Labour Government in Britain from 1975-1979).

Capitalism is inherently and unalterably an anti-democratic system of economic organisation. The real power in capitalist society does not, for the most part, reside in parliament; it resides behind closed doors in the boardrooms of large corporations. Within the state apparatus itself power is heavily concentrated in cabinet and its key advisory bodies - Treasury and the Reserve Bank.

This means that the key decisions about the allocation of resources, decisions which affect us all as they determine whether or not we will have to pay for education, housing and health etc., are not made in a democratic manner. If the directors of Telecom decide to sack 10,000 workers, destroying these people's lives in the process, we do not have the right to vote the directors responsible for that decision out of office.

Further, the workplaces in which most people spend most of their lives are not organised democratically. No one 'elects' their bosses.

Capitalists can exercise more influence on the formation of state policy than trade unions or progressive social movements. Capitalists can:

- Engage in advertising campaigns to improve the public image of business.
- Maintain well-resourced associations to both lobby government and generate public support for the adoption and implementation of desired policies.
- Extensively fund the major political parties through large corporate donations.
- Offer substantial inducements (principally in the form of future career advancements in the private sector) to state sector policy analysts to adopt, advocate and implement policies de-

"business as usual"?

sired by business interests.

- Fund academic policy research which has a pro-business ideological orientation.

- Acquire ownership of radio stations, television channels and newspapers.

Further, it must be remembered that the state is constrained by its financial dependence on revenue from the taxation of incomes generated in the process of capital accumulation. Because state power is largely dependent on capital accumulation – a process which the state cannot itself directly control in a 'private enterprise' economy – 'every occupant of state power is basically interested in promoting those conditions most conducive to accumulation'.

These domestic constraints have been compounded by the growing internationalisation of the economic system.

Reformist parties like Labour and the Alliance are committed to managing rather than transforming capitalism. The problem with this is that all the major problems we face have deep roots in capitalism and can only be eliminated when we get rid of it. Class exploitation and inequality, women's oppression, racism, war, the destruction of the natural environment – none of these can be eliminated while the entire economic system is governed by profit maximisation and market competition, rather than meeting human needs.

The Only Alternative?

Reformists in the Alliance generally respond to these arguments as follows: OK, they say, we acknowledge that the Labour/Alliance Government will not eliminate poverty, unemployment, women's oppression or racism, but it will introduce policies in the 'here and now' that will ease these problems and forms of oppression. Surely it is better to do something 'here and now' than it is to wait around for a revolution that may never come. After all, as the social democratic economist Keynes said, in the long term we're all dead.

It is on this point that the reformist argument superficially appears at its strongest, but is in reality very weak. Reformists always respond to criticisms from revolutionary socialists by claiming that we are only for revolutionary change in the long term, and consequently that we are unable to contribute to current struggles to change society.

Don't wait for change that may never come from this government – real change will only come if we fight for it!



Revolutionaries are the Best Fighters for Reform

The truth is that '*revolutionaries are the best fighters for reform*'. We try and build every struggle in the short term. We do not sit around passively awaiting 'the revolution'.

This point has been established beyond doubt already: both the Alliance and Labour Party were effectively absent from the major struggles that occurred during the 1990s such as the struggles against the ECA and benefit cuts in 1991, Maori and student occupations, and protests against the Gulf War and US intervention in Kosovo.

The Labour Party and the Alliance may not have been involved in these struggles but we were. Given our small size and limited resources we did everything we could to help build these struggles.

Actions speak louder than words. Labour and the Alliance did little to build the fightback against the National and Coalition Governments, and now that they are in government they are only making minor modifications to the New Right policy framework, rather than changing it fundamentally.

Give Them A Chance?

Many workers and students who voted for these parties think that we should give them time to change things. But there is a huge danger with this 'give them a chance' approach. The New Right policies of the past 16 years have massively redistributed income away from the working class majority towards the small greedy capitalist minority at the top of the heap, a minority with the bulk of the wealth and power in society. We need to fight for a real reversal of these policies and against accepting merely cosmetic changes.

The problem is that if we do not fight – through our unions, through mass student protests and occupations, with more flax roots protest from Maori and Pacific Island peoples – then what the Labour and Alliance Government may do in reality is end up ensuring that the New Right policy agenda becomes cemented in place.

We in the International Socialists are very small, but we will be doing everything in our power to argue for real change rather than tinkering. But ultimately real change, change to create a genuinely democratic, 'caring' and equal society, will not come through parliament. It will only come from workers and their allies rising up and overthrowing the capitalist system that is the underlying cause of all the major problems that we face.

"Lake, Mountain, Tree" or the environment and revolution

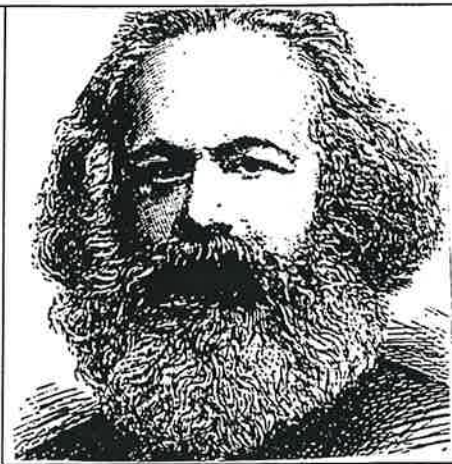
While most of New Zealand's media still worries about the state of Nandor Tanczos' haircut, John Ryan explores some of the fundamental contradictions crippling the modern environmentalist movement, and proposes a Marxist approach to the current crisis.

When poet Gary Snyder wrote that "the most revolutionary consciousness is to be found among the most revolutionary classes : animals, trees, water, air and grasses" he identified one of the key issues of our age - the distinction between the politics the radical left and the emergence of the Green movement.

'Green' has been used since the 1950s as a term to indicate sympathy for environmental issues or projects, and since the late 1970s has been adopted by a growing number of environmental parties, the New Zealand Greens amongst them (first formed in 1972 as the Values Party).

Since that time, however, more specific definitions have emerged within the movement which seek to draw a line between "shallow" environmentalism and the "econcentric" politics of "deep" ecology.

Briefly stated, the ecological position is one which radically calls into question a whole series of political, economic and social practices in a way that environmentalism does not. Pure conservationism, for example, is characteristic of a "shallow"



approach insofar as it assumes that present crises can be resolved without demanding the widespread social changes deep Greens argue are essential for a sustainable planet.

Ecologism envisages a post-industrial society critical of economic growth and technology and suggests that the Good Life will involve more work and fewer material objects. The concept of environmental limits to expansion is taken for granted by Green theorists, and is a point that brings Green politics to a fundamental confrontation with capitalist activity.

Because of the great diversity of opinion within the ranks of ecologism this contradiction is not always acknowledged and some thinkers retain a guarded tolerance for the capitalist system. A generally agreed upon point, however, is that the root cause of environmental degradation is not capitalism at all, but a culture of industrialisation.

It is this assertion that gives rise to the Green claim to be beyond the old divisions of Left and Right, on

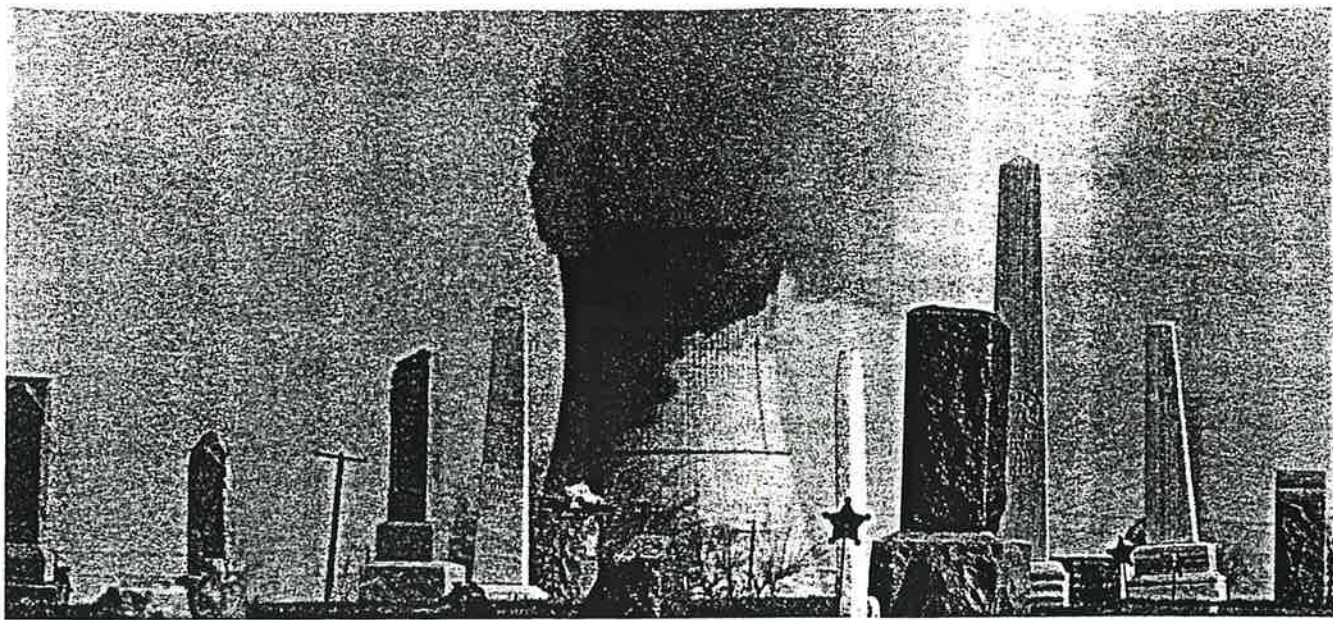
the grounds that both ideological perspectives are caught up in a common theme of economic expansion. This is to be traced to a philosophical obsession with the concerns of modernism - namely, the idea that the natural world can be thought of as a machine to be manipulated, and a belief in measuring progress through development and domination.

Green critics of industrialism have gone so far as to characterise socialism as "fair shares in extinction", pointing out that there is supposedly nothing in socialist theory that gives any emphasis to sustainability.

Greens couple this with a case for econcentrism, a perspective that seeks to empathise with the natural world. The politics of socialism are considered to be human-focused to the point of excluding any environmental concern, and critics have frequently used the example of the former "socialist" bloc to illustrate the "industrial cult" of Marxist theory.

The revolutionary socialist response to this is that none of these states were socialistic, having developed the same form of demand for material goods as capitalist nations, in competition with them. Capitalism has permeated the globe, regardless of illusory political boundaries.

Socialists agree with supporters of ecologism that environmental decay is clearly very much with us, but make the case that the Green movement should focus against the fundamental cause of this - capitalism - instead of raging against industrialisation of all forms.



Marx, writing in *Capital* stated that "capitalist production develops technology and the combining together of various processes into a social whole...only by sapping the original sources of all wealth - the soil and the labourer".

At the same time, resource conservation, recycling and pollution control are actively discouraged as they both decrease productivity (by reducing consumption) and by decreasing profits - unless of course the capitalist can throw the cost of environmental rehabilitation off onto society.

This "slash and burn" system of economics began in Medieval Europe with forest destruction and wetland drainage, and acquired global dimensions from the 16th Century onwards, culminating in dustbowls, deserts and the colonial imposition of land use patterns geared to foreign markets.

The 20th Century development of "agribusiness" was characterised by Marx as the irrational, degrading search for quick gains - "all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art of robbing the soil".

A refusal to recognise capital control as the central issue renders ecology incapable of fighting battles in the right places - in the workforce, among the jobless (victims of the structural unemployment demanded by capitalist markets) and inside the marginalised sectors that are denied political power within the Green movement because of an excessively narrow definition of "environment".

By concentrating almost

exclusively on preservationist matters the role of capitalism in deforming human environments is often ignored, as is the history of labour movements as essentially environmental organisations, fighting for the improvement of shopfloor conditions.

Furthermore, socialists insist that there is no such thing as "nature" unmediated and unmodified by human beings. Marx argued that no separation exists between human society and the wider environment, since it is impossible to define one except relation to the other - try it and see.

In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* Marx wrote that nature "is man's body, with which he must remain in continuous intercourse with if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for man is part of nature".

In this sense, socialists reject the romantic idealisation of Nature that results from a purely ecological stance, favouring instead a relationship of dialogue that incorporates humanity. Placing the non-human world upon an ideological pedestal serves only to mystify it and thus further alienate humanity.

An "eco-Marxism" would unite this position with the realisation that we find behind virtually all environmental problems, both physical and social, is poverty. Economic deprivation is of crucial importance to capitalism and has to be maintained in order to preserve the balance of power in market relations.

Related to this is capital's need

for sustained growth which depends on the control of raw goods that are increasingly found on the periphery of the world economy - the rainforests of South America, the

On top of this, the denial of class antagonisms leads ecologism to accept the naive course of legislative change through Parliament. This begins with the assumption that the State exists as a neutral authority, set up to reconcile conflicting interests. The actual reality is that governmental authorities are not free from the constraints of a system designed to further the interests of capitalism.

Genuine environmental concern from mainstream politicians is minimal and borders on absurdity, as was testified to at the initial Earth Summit in 1992 and many times since then.

To fight this failure, Greens must acknowledge the basic conservatism of its appeal for unity in the face of crisis and instead present a more accurate portrait of the world today: the reality of an emerging East-West elite converging to appropriate Third World surpluses.

A broad agenda addressing human needs in the developing world is desperately needed in Green activists wish in future to avoid the slogans of "Ecologists Go Home" they have in the past met at non-Western environmental conferences.

It is not acceptable to take refuge in the standard capitalist myth of overpopulation, a myth that relates closely to Green beliefs about natural limitations. When faced with this question of

Environment & Revolution (Contd.)

overpopulation, theorist David Pepper asks what the term actually means : overpopulation in relation to what? How do we know when such a problem exists?

We may say that overpopulation is evidenced by the existence of groups who do not have enough to eat (these are presumably the surplus people), which is what resource scarcity implies. It does not, however, necessarily follow that this starvation is produced by natural shortages. Rather, the "surplus" population may be unable to get enough to eat because it is not profitable for capitalism to supply them food - Africa is a prime example of this, especially when one considers the over-production of food in the United States. This

economic inability is a fundamental aspect of capitalism and is vital to the continued operation of capital accumulation.

With this in mind, the Green conception of inevitable and natural limits has to be reconsidered. A basic principle of socialism is that the abolition of capitalist production brings with it the ability for a society to change its means of organisation of its technical and cultural appraisals of natures.

In any case, the criticism still holds "that whenever a theory of overpopulation seizes hold in a society dominated by an elite, the non-elite invariably experience some form of political, economic and social repression". As Pepper observes "who are the surplus people? Clearly it is not us, so it must be *them* - migrant workers, racial minorities, the third world's starving masses and so on".

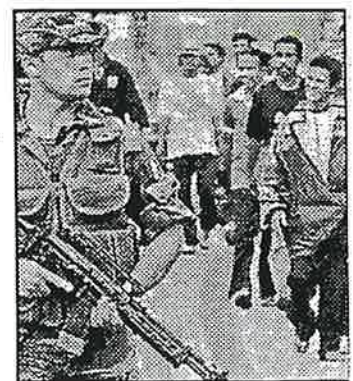
This is not to suggest that Green theory fails in its stated commitment to justice and egalitarian practice. However, it does imply need to modify a world view that may ultimately

deflect criticism away from the capitalist culprit and onto the undeserving victims of such exploitation.

Ecological politics has unquestionable strengths but much of its present support lies only among those who have the luxury of being able to care about such abstract issues going on *somewhere else* - principally, the educated and employed in Western higher tax brackets.

In the end, supporters of Green ecologism must consider the fact that one billion of the world's people live today in absolute poverty while developed, industrial nations account for 85% of the global GNP and yet hold only 23% of the population.

Because of this, it is not too much to suggest that the big question of Green politics in the 21st Century may be one of choosing sides, or of restating an ideology that ignores the disparate positions of rich and poor.



Conquering the Future

In recent years, with the notable exception of the struggle for paid parental leave, practical demands which would help the majority of women have been passed over by the feminist movement in favour of explorations of "gender theory" and a disturbing new cultural relativism, which leads Germaine Greer to condone female circumcision if performed by women. Hazel Croft examines some aspects of the women's movement.

The first wave of national women's liberation demonstrations took place in Britain, the U.S, New Zealand and Australia almost thirty years ago. On 6 March 1971 over 2 000 men, women and children marched in London demanding equal pay, equal education and opportunity, 24 hour nurseries and free contraception and abortion on demand - the four pillars of the newly flourishing women's movement.

The march was a revival of a much older celebration of International Women's Day, first organised by socialists in Europe in 1911.

May Hobbs of the Cleaners' Action Group told the marchers of her struggle to organise London office cleaners, many of whom were forced to work at night due to the lack of nursery facilities. She stressed the importance of women organising against the bosses in the workplace. The first national women's liberation conference in 1970 attracted 600 people. A local socialist newspaper described them as "a mixture of old and young, students and workers, (who) came as individuals fighting for emancipation. They were members of trade unions,

radical single-issue pressure groups and from many left organisations". The vitality of the group was summed up by the angry disruption of the Miss World contest in the same year. Women threw smoke bombs, flour, stink bombs, leaflets and rattles. One witness described how "Bob Hope freaked out, ran off the stage"!

International women's day was revived at a time of growth in working class struggle the world over and in particular the struggle of women workers.

There had been a number of strikes for equal pay - most significantly in the U.K, where 20 000 textile workers in Leeds went on strike in 1968.

Other women workers took action for better working conditions and unionisation, such as teachers, post office telephonists, and the night cleaners. In 1973 the first national hospital workers and NAGLO strikes involved large numbers of women in collective struggle for the first time.

In this atmosphere of rising class struggle many in the new movements the world over looked towards the struggles of workers, both women and men, to further the fight for women's liberation. A 1971 article in the *British Women's Newspaper* described how the threat to

conductors' jobs shows "very clearly the way the women's struggle is connected with the struggle of all workers against the bosses and for control over their lives."

But the women's movement failed to attract working class women and never related to workers' struggle on a collective and organised basis. Working class women who became involved did so as individuals.

Even at its height only a small number of women were active in the loose networks of unstructured groups and workshops. These groups tended to orientate on personal politics. The slogan "the personal is political" - while highlighting the way society limited and stunted women's "private lives" - drew women away from collective struggle and towards individual solutions.

By 1974 the leading feminist Sheila Rowbotham could comment that feminist politics had become "preoccupied with living a liberated life rather than a movement for the liberation of women".

The diversity of political ideas accelerated the fragmentation and internalisation of the movement. As the level of working class declined in the mid 1970s, many women in the movement became disillusioned in the ability of the working class to change the world. Increasingly, working class men became seen as battle for women's liberation is far from over. It is a struggle which is inextricably linked to the struggles of the vast majority of the society, those of us who create the wealth but do not control it, to forget a new, democratic society.

The struggles of the 1960s radicalised thousands of young

- continued top right of p.30.



The New Right in Aotearoa

As well as offering analysis of contemporary events from a Marxist perspective, *Socialist Review* will include in each issue a more in-depth essay exploring historical or theoretical applications of socialist ideas. Here *Brian Roper* examines some of the responses to the neo-liberal economic policies of the last fifteen years.

Since 1984 the neo-liberal policy agenda has been implemented through a comprehensive program of reform. It has centrally involving a monetarist macroeconomic strategy, general liberalisation of regulatory control over markets, regressive taxation reform, public sector reform, a 'redesign' of the welfare state, and anti-union industrial relations reform. The radical critics of this program of reform, including Marxists, feminists and anti-racists, have addressed four sets of key questions:

1. What major changes in state policy have taken place — particularly in the areas of economic, social and industrial relations policy?
2. Why has this historic shift in the formulation and implementation of state policy occurred?
3. What impact have these reforms had on the economy and society? Who have been the major winners and losers?
4. Are there any realistic alternatives? If so, then which of these is preferable and why?

These questions are necessarily inter-related because in order to develop a convincing critique of the neo-liberal policy agenda it is crucial to have developed a clear sense of the broad empirical outlines of this agenda, a sophisticated, theoretically informed and historically grounded explanation, a systematic

empirical assessment of its impact, and, finally to use both explanation and critique to lay the foundation for the presentation of political alternatives. Assuming that readers are at least broadly familiar with the neo-liberal policy agenda, this chapter proceeds directly to address the questions pertaining to explanation, critique and alternatives.

Explaining the historical shift from Keynesianism to neo-liberalism

Why did the fourth Labour Government rapidly and comprehensively implement an essentially neo-liberal policy agenda from 1984 to 1990? And why has this broad policy framework remained in place since — being further extended in substantial ways by National-dominated governments during the 1990s and little more than incrementally adjusted by the Labour-Alliance Coalition Government? These questions have, for the most part, elicited intellectual responses from both right and left which are generally weak and unsystematic.¹ The over-riding problem is a failure to develop an holistic historical account which conceptually integrates in a theoretically coherent manner the highly complex relationships between the capitalist economic system, class struggles and wider patterns of societal conflict, ideological shift from social democratic Keynesianism to neo-liberalism, and the specific institutional structure of the state in New Zealand.

Throughout the postwar era New Zealand politics has been profoundly shaped by changing economic conditions. The long boom from 1945 to 1973 underpinned the political stability and conservatism which characterised parliamentary politics for much of this period,

while simultaneously ensuring the continued dominance of social democratic Keynesianism as the underlying intellectual paradigm for state policy-making. When the long boom collapsed, both in New Zealand and internationally, in the wake of the global recession in 1974, the 'golden weather' was over. From then until the present the economy has suffered from economic stagnation, mass unemployment, recurrent and growing balance of payment deficits, increasing public and private indebtedness, declining real incomes for a large majority of the population, high inflation (during the 1970s), and high levels of strike activity (from 1968 to 1991).² In short, governments have remained in the persistent and tight grip of a prolonged economic crisis for the entire period from 1974 to the present (alleviated by cyclical recoveries in 1983-84 and 1993-94). The political instability, abandonment of social democratic Keynesianism, and adoption of neo-liberalism which have characterised parliamentary politics during the latter period can be interpreted as crisis management by governments wrestling with economic forces over which they have limited (but still significant) control.

Much of this is uncontroversial and is widely accepted. It is more controversial to suggest that the collapse of the long boom and onset of prolonged economic stagnation has been caused by a general decline in profitability, a decline which has impacted negatively on productive investment, growth and employment. This is the classical Marxist explanation of the economic crisis, an explanation originating with Marx's theory of capitalist economic crises presented in the third volume of *Capital*, but which has been further developed and applied through a number of important studies conducted during

...and the socialist critique

the postwar era (both internationally and within New Zealand).³

The Marxist analysis of the economic 'golden weather' of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the 'stormy weather' that has prevailed since the mid-1970s, has profound implications for understanding the general direction of New Zealand politics during the past half century.

Firstly, whereas during the 1950s and 1960s employers could afford to grant real wage increases to their workers because labour productivity was growing strongly, the effective cessation of rising labour productivity from 1974 to 1991 turned wage bargaining into a 'zero sum game' in which real wages rises could only be granted at the cost of a decline in profit rates. Hence industrial conflict became more widespread, intense and increasingly bitter.

Second, as we have seen the economic pressures on the state also increased greatly, especially with respect to budgetary or fiscal policy. As profitability and growth declined, and unemployment rose, the state was faced with rising social expenditure on one side (as more people became dependent on welfare for income support), and increasing difficulty in maintaining taxation revenue on the other (as business and high income earners more aggressively pursued tax avoidance). The result was a fiscal crisis which then forced the state to attempt to rein in social expenditure (given a persistent unwillingness to counter corporate tax avoidance and maintain high marginal tax rates for high income earners).⁴

Third, for these reasons, the state had a reduced capacity to foster the illusion that it was a neutral arbiter in societal conflict and that it generally made policy in 'the public interest'. It was subject to greatly increased economic and political pressures to intervene in in-

dustrial disputes on the side of employers. At the same time, the mounting fiscal crisis and growing political pressure from business pushed governments to severely restrain and/or cut social expenditure while simultaneously introducing tax cuts for business and high income earners.⁵

Class struggle and other forms of societal conflict increased substantially from 1968 onwards. The first phase of this period of heightened class struggle was characterised by a shift in the balance of power from the capitalist to the working class as strike activity skyrocketed. This culminated in the union movement's defeat of the Muldoon Government's attempt to freeze wages in 1976-77.⁶

During the remainder of the 1970s and early 1980s the balance of power shifted in favour of capitalists — strikes became defensive in nature as employers became increasingly industrially militant and as rising unemployment undermined union bargaining power. Simultaneously business became more politically active and directed this activism towards lobbying successive governments to adopt the neo-liberal policy agenda.⁷ By 1983 business was largely unified in its support for the neo-liberal agenda, so much so that the Top Tier Group (composed of representatives of the major business groups) was able to present a concise summary of this agenda to the incoming Labour Government and argue for its implementation.⁸ Thereafter, New Zealand's major business groups continued to promote this agenda into the new millennium.

These economic, social and political developments gave rise to, and, in turn, were influenced by the shift in the prevailing theoretical orthodoxy within the international economics profession from Keynesianism to monetarism during the 1970s. This paradigm shift

is highly significant because it is the prevailing economic orthodoxy that provides the underlying conceptual framework for policy—merely industrial struggle but virtually all major forms of societal conflict and what political scientists refer to as 'interest group activity'.

It is often mistakenly assumed that Marxists consider that the state always acts in the interests of the ruling capitalist class, and that capitalist interests always prevail in industrial and other societal conflicts. Such a view would make a nonsense of the classical Marxist conception of class struggle; it is precisely a *struggle* in which capitalist interests generally prevail, but in which workers and their allies can win important victories (either forcing employers to grant higher wages and/or better conditions, or forcing the government to grant substantial policy concessions to the workers' movement).

The point is that while Marxists, and other radical critics of neo-liberalism, argue that the state generally acts in favour of capitalist interests, they possess a much more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the economy, civil society and the state than most anti-Marxist scholars are prepared to acknowledge.

While keeping this crucial qualification in mind, it is important to indicate why it is that Marxists accurately predicted that the implementation of the neo-liberal policy agenda would only benefit capitalists and other high income earners while systematically disadvantaging the working class majority. It is primarily, but by no means exclusively, because capitalist society is centrally organized around the exploitation of the working class by capitalists. The entire process of capital accumulation is dependant upon the maintenance of a satisfactory level of profitability by most businesses, and the ultimate source

How the New Right made the rich, richer

of profit is the social surplus product which workers produce over and above their subsistence needs. In capitalist society the surplus product assumes a historically specific social form — surplus value. Profit, interest and rent are the monetary forms of surplus value.¹² From this perspective the fact that each year since 1984 between 54-59 per cent of New Zealand's total market income has gone to the richest 20 per cent of the population is no accident; it is a concrete manifestation of the production of surplus value by the working class, and its appropriation by capitalists.¹³

When the process of capital accumulation enters a period of prolonged crisis due to declining profitability, the state becomes subject to immense pressure to revive the health and viability of this process by introducing policies aimed at increasingly the profitability of business (for example, cutting tax rates on profit, introducing pro-employer industrial relations legislation). So-called 'economic restructuring' is precisely a form of restructuring designed to revive the economic health of capitalism by improving profitability and raising the incomes of the rich while, simultaneously, reducing real incomes for the majority of wages and salary earners, as well as beneficiaries, superannuitants and students.

Impact of New Right Policies

So what impact has the implementation of neo-liberal policies had on the economy and society?¹⁴ With respect to the economy, as is graphically clear both from the official statistics and the relevant secondary literature, the monetarist macroeconomic strategy has succeeded in reducing inflation but it has failed to generate a sustained economic recovery let alone anything even remotely approximating the high average annual growth rates of the 1950s and 1960s, to substantially reduce unemployment, or to prevent balance of payments deficits from rising to alarm-

ing levels from the mid-1990s onwards. While public debt was reduced during the 1990s, this was more than offset by the very substantial rise of total private debt during the same period. Productive investment has remained weak for the entire period from 1984 to the present with the passing exception of the short-lived mid-1990s recovery. So even in terms of its own stated policy objectives and priorities neo-liberalism has largely failed.¹⁵

With respect to class inequality, income and wealth have become much more unequally distributed, with the bottom three quintiles having substantially lower real incomes now than in 1984, while the real incomes of the richest quintile are substantially higher.¹⁶ This applies to both pre-tax market income, and after-tax disposable income. At one end of the social spectrum the wealth of those identified in the *National Business Review's* annual Rich List grew substantially throughout the 1980s and 1990s, while at the other, poverty has increased substantially, with growing reliance on private charity organisations to provide emergency relief. The immediate causes of this rising inequality are clear and include: rising unemployment and welfare dependency, substantial increases in managerial salaries, the negative impact of the Employment Contracts Act on union bargaining power and hence wages and conditions of employment; the fourth Labour Government's introduction of GST combined with major reductions in corporate tax rates and marginal rates for those on high incomes; and the National Government's reductions in benefit rates and tightening of eligibility criteria in the 1991 Budget.¹⁷

Feminists have highlighted the extent to which society is pervaded by fundamental inequalities between women and men. Horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour force means that women are over-represented in a narrow range of relatively poorly paid occupations, and within particular occupations tend to be stuck at the bottom of managerial hierar-

chies. Compared with men, women are under-represented amongst the self-employed and employers, have lower participation rates in full-time employment, are over-represented amongst the under-employed and are less likely to be officially counted as unemployed. Because women are less likely to be engaged in full-time paid employment, they are over-represented amongst those reliant on part-time employment and/or welfare for income support. Hence women's incomes are substantially lower than men, women possess less wealth, and are more likely to have insecure employment.

Female participation in paid employment continues to be adversely affected by inadequate, or non-existent, employer and government provision of child-care and parental leave.¹⁸ Within the family-household an unequal gender division of labour prevails. Even where both partners are also working in paid employment, women perform most of the domestic labour and child-care.¹⁹ Far from being a 'haven in a heartless world', the family-household is a primary site of male violence and sexual abuse.

The overall effect of neo-liberal reforms to economic, industrial relations, and social policy has been to increase inequality in many of these areas.²⁰ Because women have historically been over-represented amongst those on low to middle incomes, and under-represented amongst those on high incomes, they were on average more adversely affected by the general increase in income inequality than men (in 1996, the median income of was 57.2 per cent of their male counterparts²¹). More specifically, because approximately 90 per cent of the female population falls outside the top quintile, and because this was the only income group to experience net income rises due to the post-1984 tax reforms, only a very small minority of women benefited while the majority were further disadvantaged.²² The 1991 benefit cuts had a disproportionately heavy impact on women because of their greater reliance on welfare for income support (21.8 per cent of all women compared to 17.3 per cent of all men in

1996²³). The National Government scrapped the Employment Equity Act 1990 and introduced the Employment Contracts Act 1991 removing award protection for key areas of female employment (clerical, retail and service work) that have been historically very difficult for unions to organise, and making it much more difficult for unions to maintain pay and conditions amongst part-time and low paid workers. Further, women use medical services more frequently than men, and hence have been affected to a greater extent by user charges and the failure of the health reforms to deliver shorter waiting lists. Women have also been adversely affected by the introduction of market rents for state housing. Because female students have lower incomes on average than men after they graduate, they face greater difficulties in repaying their student loans.

Neo-liberal policies have had similar impacts on Maori and Pacific Island peoples. The labour force is ethnically segregated with these groups over-represented amongst relatively poorly paid occupations in the manufacturing and service sectors, and under-represented amongst management, self-employed and employers. The over-representation of these groups amongst blue collar occupations meant that they were especially severely hit by the rapid rise in unemployment during from 1984 to 1992. While unemployment increased substantially for all ethnic groups, Maori and Pacific Islanders experienced the greatest increases.²⁴ Because they are over-represented amongst those on low incomes, Maori and Pacific Islanders experienced substantial declines in income during the period from 1984 to the present.²⁵ These groups received little benefit from the tax cuts, suffered greatly from the benefit cuts, were particularly hard hit by the introduction of market rents for state housing, and experience difficulty gaining access to university education.

In sum, neo-liberalism has failed to generate a sustained economic recovery while substantially increasing all of the major forms of social inequality.

...are there any alternatives?

The critics of neo-liberalism who have been most prominent, both within the scholarly literature and also in the mainstream media, have been solidly based in the social democratic Keynesian tradition of thought and reformist political practice. Accordingly, in addressing the question — 'What are the alternatives to neo-liberalism?' — they have advocated policies that are broadly consistent with this tradition, in other words, they have advocated a social democratic Keynesian policy framework as a feasible and desirable alternative to neo-liberalism.

The Reformist Alternative

The Keynesian tradition has always encompassed a broad range of individual positions from those on the right who accept much of the neoclassical tradition while seeking to retain some conceptual elements of Keynes's own macroeconomic perspective, to those on the left who are much more critical of the neoclassical tradition and draw upon the more radical conceptual elements of Keynes' conceptual vision of the way that market economies work and should be managed. For the sake of brevity we can group these individual positions together as 'right' and 'left' Keynesians.

Right Keynesians argue, in essence, for the moderation of the currently dominant neo-liberal policy framework in a Keynesian direction.²⁶ They are highly critical of neo-liberalism in general, and the monetarist approach to economic management in particular, but also consider that much of the restructuring of the private and public sectors was necessary and should not be reversed. Hence rather than advocating a full-scale return to the Keynesian past they advocate an approach to macroeconomic management which places less emphasis on maintaining low inflation, and more on generating higher growth and lower unemployment. In this vein, they advocate more discretionary state intervention to facilitate economic development (more active government support for agriculture, manufacturing, and research and development), a less extreme unilateral approach to trade liberalisation, and tighter regulation over markets with monopoly providers. More emphasis is placed on social policy with the advo-

cacy of institutional changes in public sector governance and provision (involving a rejection of the more extreme features of the neo-liberal managerialist model) combined with slightly increased expenditure in some areas. In industrial relations the amendment of the ECA is recommended to improve trade union organizing and bargaining rights.

Left Keynesians agree with much of this, but argue that a reforming government should go further. Jesson and Kelsey, for example, argue for a more interventionist and nationalist approach to economic management, more extensive rebuilding of the welfare state, a more substantially balanced industrial relations legislative framework for industrial relations, much tighter regulation of financial markets, and so forth.²⁷

Jane Kelsey, in particular, places much more emphasis on issues pertaining to Maori, women and the environment than right Keynesians. Her work is extremely valuable because it presents the most comprehensive and systematic scholarly critique of the neoliberal agenda, while also systematically outlining a left Keynesian alternative.

The Socialist Alternative

But what even these most 'radical' critics do not provide is serious consideration of the more radical vision of societal transformation advocated by Marxists (socialist revolution), radical and socialist feminists (women's liberation), socialist black and Maori activists (end of racism and tino rangitiratanga achieved through the elimination of capitalism), and by anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-communists (working class revolution proceeding directly to establishing a class-less and state-less self-governing soci-

ety). These perspectives draw upon long-standing traditions of thought and practice which support the struggle for reform within the existing system but which argue that reform is not enough. They are critical of the central idea that underpins social democratic Keynesianism; the idea that it is neither feasible nor desirable to fundamentally transform the existing society, and that therefore the most that we can hope and fight for is incremental reformist change within the existing system.

While Jesson often called for the intellectual revival of the Left, and Kelsey advocates 'a vigorous and open contest of ideas that is rooted in social reality'²⁸, it is disturbing that in their own published work they effectively marginalise these revolutionary traditions. For example, neither of them take the classical Marxist tradition seriously, nor does their published work demonstrate more than a weak and superficial understanding of it. The main justification for this neglect of radical alternatives to neo-liberalism appears to be straightforward — you either fight for reform, or you fight for revolution, and since even radical reform seems a remote possibility, revolution clearly is not a realistic option.

This superficially appears to be a strong argument, but only because it distorts, caricatures and misrepresents the revolutionary position. Advocates of revolutionary change do recognise the importance of fighting for reforms within the existing system, no matter how small they may be, and they also recognise the vital importance of the everyday struggles of workers, women, Maori, students, and others, for a better life. But they argue that such reforms will never be sufficient to create a genuinely emancipatory, egalitarian and democratic society. Reforms are not enough because the capitalist system is inherently and unalterably exploitative, breeds alienation and oppression, generates massive inequalities, is brutally competitive, frequently violent, and systematically undermines and restricts the participation of the working class majority in the governance of the economy, society and polity.

What is missing from the social democratic Keynesian scholarly discourse, and from the political programs of the Alliance, Labour and

Green parties, is a clear critical analysis of capitalism and a serious consideration of the socialist alternatives to it. However unfashionable it maybe, it is the classical Marxist tradition which still provides the most systematic and sophisticated analysis, not only of the multiple failings of capitalism, but also of the way in which capitalism simultaneously creates the working class — a social agency with the potential collective capacity to overthrow capitalism and create the participatory form of social democracy which is, for those in the classical Marxist tradition, socialism *beyond* capitalism.²⁹

Guide to Reading

Many of the sources cited in this article provide useful accounts of policy change in New Zealand. The best overview and most powerful critique of the neo-liberal policy agenda is J. Kelsey, 1997. The literature is much weaker with respect to explaining the shift from Keynesianism to neo-liberalism, see B. Roper, 1991a and 1991b for a critical discussion of the existing accounts and presentation of a Marxist explanation. The various contributions to B. Roper and C. Rudd (eds), 1993 and C. Rudd and B. Roper (eds), 1997 are also illuminating in this regard. The critique of neo-liberalism is much more fully developed and there are many useful sources available, see J. Boston and M. Holland (eds), 1990; J. Boston and P. Dalziel (eds), 1992; J. Boston, P. Dalziel, and S. St John (eds), 1999; Easton 1997 and 1999. The Keynesian alternative is also articulated in these sources. For an outline of the socialist alternative see A. Callinicos, *The Revenge of History: Marxism and the East European Revolutions*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1991, pp. 106-33; J. Molyneux, 1991.

Notes

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⁴ See J. Boston, 'New Zealand's Welfare State in Transition' in J. Boston, P. Dalziel, and S. St John (eds), *Redesigning the Welfare State in New Zealand: Problems, Policies, Prospects*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1999, p.3; C. Rudd, 'The Welfare State', in C. Rudd and B. Roper (eds), 1997, pp.237-55.

⁵ B. Roper, 'A Level Playing Field? Business Political Activism and State Policy Formation' in B. Roper and C. Rudd (eds), *State and Economy in New Zealand*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1993, pp. 147-71.

⁶ For a detailed account of industrial conflict during this period, and of the campaign against the wage freeze, see J. Boston, *Incomes Policy in New Zealand: 1968-1984*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1984, pp.89-189.

⁷ For condensed overviews of the shifting balance of class forces during this time see T. Bramble with S. Heal, 'Trade Unions', in C. Rudd and B. Roper (eds), 1997, pp.130-6; B.S. Roper, 'Contested Terrain', in *New Zealand Monthly Review*, no. 325, June/July 1990, 6-13.

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²² Statistics New Zealand, *Women*, 1998, p.136.

²³ Statistics New Zealand, *Women*, 1998, p.124.

²⁴ See E. Poata-Smith, 'The Political Economy of Inequality between Maori and Pakeha', in C. Rudd and B. Roper (eds), 1997; Statistics New Zealand, *New Zealand Now: Maori*, Wellington, 1998; D. Pearson, *A Dream Deferred: The Origins of Ethnic Conflict in New Zealand*, Allen & Unwin, Wellington, 1990; P. Spoonley, *Racism and Ethnicity*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1993; P. Spoonley, D. Pearson & C. Macpherson (eds), *Nga Patai: Racism and Ethnic Relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1996.

²⁵ Statistics New Zealand, 1999, p.27.

²⁶ See for example: J. Boston

notes – continued on right of p.30

Can We Come Together?

The movement for gay liberation exploited. In some quarters this started at a bar in New York solidarity was reciprocated. Huey when lesbians and gays fought Newton of the Black Panthers back against police harassment. wrote from his prison cell in 1970 *Kevin Ovenden traces the* to express his support for the new developments since, and argues gay movement. However, the vision that "identity politics" are not of revolutionary change was very enough to fight sexual vague. In many ways it flowed out oppression. of the least political aspect of the

In June 1969, a routine police 1960s revolt, the 'counter culture', raid on the popular gay bar, the which emphasised 'dropping out' Stonewall Inn on New York's and establishing an alternative Christopher Street, touched off three lifestyle. nights of riots and demonstrations.

The modern gay liberation hand in These ideas went hand in movement was born. In the a movement to confront anti-gay immediate aftermath of the bigotry. In the U.K the GLF Stonewall riot the Gay Liberation organised sit-ins in bars which Front was formed. refused to serve gays, various

Now, thirty one years on, the marches and protests and oppression of lesbians and gay men contingents on marches with the is still very much a part of everyday TUC against anti-union bills. life. The fact that consenting The excitement of the new

homosexual sex was illegal in New movement made up for the lack of Zealand until the mid-1980s is a any clear idea of how to overcome shocking reminder of this. The sexual oppression, or any idea of continued backlash over Aids, where this oppression came from in increased gay bashing and Christian the first place. But as the initial Heritage's insults aimed at lesbian enthusiasm waned and the parents are other examples. The movement had to confront real concerted efforts of the previous questions, the confusion took its National led government to destroy toll. Many activists began to see the social gains of the 1980s and go homophobia not as a product of the back to a new Victorian morality had nuclear family under capitalism its effects on lesbians and gays. But but as an inherent attitude in all despite a growing anger at these straights.

attacks the gay movement has failed Consequently the fight for to draw wider forces into the gay liberation was presented as a struggle. Once characterised by the fight against the "straight world", slogan "Come Together", it is now regardless of the class makeup of more fragmented than ever. that world. 'Radical Drag' and

The GLF styled itself a 'Radical Queenery' were designed revolutionary movement, albeit in a to shock the "straight world" rather slightly confused way. The name than win sections of workers to itself echoed the Vietnamese fight for gay rights. It also provoked Liberation Front and the GLF splits in the movement. Further declared its solidarity with all splits took place as lesbians movements of the oppressed and effectively left the GLF to focus on

the women's movement. The shapeless nature of the GLF did not lead to greater democracy but to the emergence of a articulate wealthy leaders not accountable to any democratic structure. The GLF fell apart in the U.K in 1972.

In two years it had succeeded in making lesbian and gay liberation a central political issue in both the U.S and Britain, and had encouraged thousands of, mainly professional and wealthier, people to come out as openly gay. It popularised the use of the word "gay" as a badge of pride in opposition to oppressive terms like "queer". It was also an advance on the highly respectable and conservative lobbying organisations like the Committee for Homosexual Equality, which had led the field in the 1950s and 1960s. However, its lasting impact was in the explosion of the gay scene.

The main gay-rights groups in New Zealand today focus on advocacy and putting pressure on officials and M.Ps, as well as organising social events and "lifestyle" celebrations. The direct action tactics of the GLP: kiss-ins, pickets and demonstrations are rarely seen in our movements. Local gay movements have not succeeded in building anything like a national movement or in organising the considerable number of gays and lesbians who want to fight back.

The confused theories of the early movements have been sharpened into a set of ideas - identity politics. The idea that simply asserting your identity is the way to overcome oppression leads away from collective struggle. For those who can afford it, it is possible to assert your identity on the gay scene. Clubbing, shopping



and fashion become seen as liberating activities but they are inaccessible to the majority of lesbians and gays. Furthermore identity politics centres on enlarging the so-called "pink economy", making money for gay businessmen, rather than challenging homophobia in the rest of society. The glorification of a particular lifestyle is directly counterposed to winning the widest possible support for the struggle for gay rights.

Frequently the identity is which is seen as liberating in fact reflects the pressure of homophobia in society. The idea of a particular sensibility often boils down to accepting the reactionary idea that gay men are narcissistic and vain and lesbians aggressive and ambitious.

The use of the word "queer" by many activists is symptomatic of the isolation of the movement. People can choose to call themselves queer within the confines of the ghetto - or a tokenistic one night a month at some local dance bar - but "queer politics" is less than attractive to the majority of lesbians and gay men who have no choice about having the term queer hurled at them as a term of derision and abuse.

The focus on identity

politics leads to potentially positive events like Pride Week using protest simply as stunts which can provide publicity. Only small numbers are needed for such stunts and this reinforces the move away from mass struggle. The result is an inverse moralism, with a handful of activists seeing themselves acting on everyone else's behalf and blaming the mass of gays and straights for not becoming involved.

Socialists question this insistence on the divisions of "gay" and "straight". We see this obsession with categorisation and labelling all aspects of human life as one of the many negative results of capitalism. We argue human sexuality is best viewed as a continuum, with freedom to experiment and identify and act regardless of label or "identity". Thus the so-called "straight" community should be involved in gay liberation struggles, because a greater democracy of sexuality will see alienation, loneliness and feelings of isolation decrease for all of us.

It is necessary to place the fight for gay liberation within the overall political picture. Failure to do this has led to serious mistakes. In Britain the campaigns against homophobic rappers Buju Banton and Shabba Ranks provoked a racist backlash of the wealthy against working blacks. Calls for banning

them added to the already noisy chorus of bigotry coming from the right wing. Instead of winning young blacks to see that black people and gays face a common enemy - the system which oppresses them - it wrote them off as irredeemable bigots.

The last few years have seen explosions of anger against attacks on gays, continued institutional bigotry against lesbian and gay couples and underfunding of AIDS research. But the ideas that dominate the gay scene has held this anger and frustration back. Separatist arguments have been directed against involving straight workers and against the need for radically democratic organisation. The need for a politics which breaks out of the ghetto and unites those fighting back, rather than emphasising their differences, has never been clearer.

Counter-Song to 'The Friendliness of the World'

So does that mean we've got to
rest contented
And say 'That's how it is and
always must be'
And spurn the brimming glass for
what's been emptied
Because we've heard it's better to
go thirsty?

So does that mean we've got to sit
here shivering
Since uninvited guests are not
admitted
And wait while those on top go on
considering
What pains and joys we are to be
permitted?

Better, we think, would be to rise
in anger
And not go without the slightest
pleasure
And, warding off those who bring
pain and hunger
Fix up the world to live in at our
leisure.

Bertolt Brecht

"Home Sweet Home" theories of

In the lead up to the last general election, all major political parties promoted their policies as "family friendly", and the National and ACT parties in particular tried to portray itself as the party for "New Zealanders and their families", creating policies for families by family people. Collective nostalgia for a non-existent past seemed to sweep the rank and file of the right, with a collective yearning after old-time suburban uniformity, picket fences, *The Waltons*, and mums in aprons worming its way into the rhetoric of all major parties' campaigns.



Jenny Shipley and Jim Bolger based both much of their political personas around their status as "family people" and defenders of the family. Yet the National and coalition government's policies - involving cuts to jobs, welfare, health, education, social services and so on - have hurt families very badly. Clearly there is a rhetoric of "family values" which serves a purpose separate from the actual maintenance of family life.

There is a mythology of the family promoted by politicians, the media and leading figures in society. Firstly, the family is seen as "natural and traditional", a universal, eternal, unchanging institution reflecting fixed biological and psychological drives. It is "normal" to be in a family, and therefore anyone who is not (especially lesbians and gays, single parents and people choosing to live in alternative communal households) can be branded "abnormal", "unnatural" or "unfortunate".

Secondly, the family is promoted as "loving and secure". How many times do we hear that children need to have two parents, one of each gender, as role models - as if somehow this is the only way they will learn respectful and loving behaviour? So if you are not in a family, not only are you "abnormal", you are also "deprived".

The reality of family life for many, if not most people is very different to this idealised image of love and security. Hidden behind those quaint smiling family photographs are the physical and psychological violence of wife beating, child battering, rape, repression, inhibition and victimisation. The family home is the primary site of violence, both physical and sexual, towards **women**. Even where these extremes of brutality do not occur, the pressures of trying to live up to the idealised family life we are presented with leads to stress and everyday unhappiness for millions.

Why, then, do most people still

choose to live in families? The social pressures to do so are enormous, and easily lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness and inadequacy for those who do not meet social expectations. But even though families are widely recognised as pressure cooker environments, they still provide a measure of love and comfort; some kind of security in a world which offers ordinary people little else.

This point is crucial: when socialists criticise the way families are organised and moralised over in capitalist society, we are merely recognising the reality that lies behind the ideal picture, not saying the ideal picture (albeit an impossible one in this system) isn't nice. We want to fight for a world where people can love and nurture each other and depend on each other, not where they feel trapped by fear and isolation into a dead marriage. We want to champion friendship and trust and support and all the things which capitalists promise in their rhetoric and never deliver in their

: Socialism and the family



sordid reality. We see the flaws of a systems which leaves our private lives distorted and dominated through stress, poverty, alienation and isolation. Ours is the politics of hope: optimism of the heart combined with realism of the intellect. We want real change, and recognise that the model currently offered in this society is rotten to the core, and so are its family values.

The nuclear family plays a very important role for capitalist society. Those with the wealth (the ruling class of big business people, senior government bureaucrats and large shareholder parasites) have a mechanism by which they can pass on that wealth to children who will be the next generation of rulers.

Meanwhile, those without wealth (i.e. the majority in society - workers and the unemployed) will cheaply reproduce, through their children, the next generation of workers in their private family units - all of this at little or no cost to the governments which will later

tax these children as citizens and to the businesses which will later exploit them as workers.

So what is the socialist alternative to the capitalist family? We are for people living in whatever arrangements they desire, provided that they are not drawn together through economic coercion or constraints. So if you do want to commit to a person of the opposite sex, have children and live happily ever after, go for it. But if you'd prefer an alternative to this, it should not be judged abnormal or deviant and you should not suffer discrimination as a result.

It is easy enough to say this, but how can it happen? There needs to be an economic basis in society for such an alternative. With real social equality and an end to discrimination, women will not fall easily into the role of wife and mother confined to the home. With the scrapping of the system which sees massive profits go to a few wealthy tycoons, there will be plenty of resources to provide child care, domestic services and quality restaurants to everyone, thus freeing women from the eternal provision of necessities.

Of course people will want to look after their children, enjoy the pleasures of cooking, and still want "quiet nights in", but the point is that these will become opportunities for human development and happiness, not overwhelming and depressing tasks in some routine. Socialist views of the family are about rediscovering the real com-

munity, not that of politicians' empty speeches, but the one which produces the wealth of the country. When whole communities share in the tasks of child development and support - as they have traditionally done in Maori and pre-capitalist English society - then some of the images so prevalent and yet so impossible practically under capitalism may translate into reality. The Norwegian novelist Agnar Mykle

sums the socialist position up brilliantly when he writes of socialism as "more friendship and less marriage" - real feeling, real support, and an end to the illusions of the nuclear family, which causes so much terror, depression and misery in New Zealand today.



Putting "New Zealand First"? : What Marxists say about immigration

Winston Peters manipulation of racist and anti-Asian rhetoric in the 1996 election campaign highlighted not only the ongoing existence of this kind of bigotry, but also the very divided responses to the whole idea of nationhood and immigration from the Left. Here John Ryan explores Marxist interpretations and opinions of immigration policy.

We live in an era in which global financial institutions and multinational corporations have an unprecedented ability to move capital around the world to seek the best return for it. Large corporations have become supranational entities unbounded by national laws or regulations.

Yet this freedom of movement across national boundaries does not extend to the vast majority, those whose work is necessary to give this capital any real value. On the contrary: immigration controls in New Zealand and around the world are becoming tighter.

Socialists oppose all immigration controls because they help prop up the system of nation states and national boundaries that keep workers around the world divided. Like racism, sexism and homophobia, nationalism serves to divide us and obscure our common interest in uniting to fight the system that oppresses us all.

Immigration policy and racism go hand in hand. The White Australia policy, abolished only in 1973, is a good example of this. New Zealand has followed a more covert course, but with the same intent. This has ranged from special, late night extensions of Parliament to push through anti-boat people legislation to a "careful selection" (i.e manifestly unjust) selection process that rejects some 500 of the

750 refugee applications received each year.

Despite this, many sincere anti-racists argue in favour of immigration controls. In both New Zealand and Australia these people have often followed the lead of the Labour party and trade unionists who line up with conservative factions in supporting existing controls. A few of the arguments used to support immigration are worth considering:

"Immigration costs jobs"

- this idea has been around since the nineteenth century. Historically there has usually been an explicitly racist element to this argument - the belief that migrants will work for a pittance, won't go on strike, and will thus undermine jobs and conditions for white New Zealanders. Even without this components, many anti-racists still believe there are only "so many jobs to go around". This is one reason why Australia's peak trade union organisation, the ACTU, calls for an increased intake of refugees, to be matched by a similar reduction in the "skilled worker" category.

The evidence reveals that this argument does not stand up to scrutiny. Australian studies show that immigration either creates jobs or has no detrimental influence - in 1991 the National Population Council concluded that "close statistical analysis tends to suggest that immigration has no significant aggregate impact on either wage changes, price inflation or unemployment... migrants in the past have usually created as many jobs as they have taken".

The trouble with the argument that immigration costs jobs is that it identifies foreign workers as the problem, rather than the government or Mobil, Carter-Holt



Harvey or ANZ Bank. It leads to the idea that the union movement should look to excluding foreign workers rather than fighting the job slashing activities of New Zealand business.

"Immigration worsens social problems"

- a consistent theme of the propaganda of those in power is that social problems such as poverty, unemployment and the housing shortage are caused by the existence of too many people. This is a convenient excuse for the system.

Every additional person entering the country is simultaneously an extra mouth to feed, person to be housed and so on - but also an extra worker to produce food, build the houses and so on.

If the system doesn't employ them to do the necessary work, it's not because there are "too many people" but because the employers - whose concern is profit rather than human need - can't make money out of their labour.

"Immigration weakens the position of indigenous people in society" - this argument is based on the idea that the level of oppression of Maori in society is linked to the proportion they make up in the general population. This is as silly as it sounds - the real cause of the

- continued bottom of p.30.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ?

by Lindsey German

Human nature

IT'S A commonplace view that society is unchanging. Most things that we learn at school reinforce this idea, and the institutions of British society lean heavily on the notion of stability and continuity—parliament, the monarchy and so on.

And just as things supposedly never change, so human beings are seen as equally unchanging. The idea that there is a basic human nature, which usually leads people to behave badly toward one another, is very deeply rooted. Competitiveness, greed and selfishness are viewed as fundamental human characteristics.

Sayings such as 'there's nothing new under the sun' or 'everyone wants their pound of flesh' reflect a society where everything is either driven by material incentives, or coercion.

But a brief acquaintance with forms of society other than modern capitalism shows there is nothing inevitable about human behaviour. Sioux Indians in North America collaborated with one another to solve the intelligence tests foisted upon them by anthropologists. The Sioux could not comprehend the idea of competing against one another because they acted collectively and cooperatively in order to live.

In Europe during the middle ages it was considered a heresy to believe the world was spherical. Now it is a proven and accepted scientific fact. Lending money for interest was a sin—today the 'sinners' would more likely end up in the House of Lords.

Even before the industrial revolution attitudes were completely different. For example, there was little conception of time as we know it. Time was judged only by the sun. The early factory owners had immense difficulty in forcing their new workers to accept a working day dictated by the clock.

Ideas are not isolated from the society in which they develop. On the contrary, human beings act together to produce their livelihoods, and ideas arise from those social relations. So the ideas in any society

bear a direct relationship to the way in which things are produced.

To understand this, we need to start not from human nature, but from the real world. As Marx put it, social being determines consciousness—not the other way round.

Men and women are affected first and foremost by the way in which they live, how they produce the means of subsistence and organise production and reproduction. From very early on in human history men and women have banded together in order to produce what they needed for food and shelter. In so doing, they enter into a social relationship with one another—what Marx calls the 'social relations of production.'

The ideas in any particular society arise from the way things are produced and the social relations of production. As society changes from one method of producing to another—changes in the 'mode of production'—so the old ideas come into conflict with the new ways of doing things, and new ideas are born.

The 'human nature' characteristic of capitalist society is in reality a set of ideas very specific to that society. Capitalism is based on competition and on the accumulation of capital. Rewards therefore go to the most grasping and powerful. Laws and customs of inheritance reinforce this.

The divorce of workers from the product of their labour and the consequent alienation they suffer only serves to reinforce many of the more backward ideas, and to increase the feeling of powerlessness in the face of the grasping and powerful.

But as soon as there is any *collective* action—protests, strikes, campaigns—then those ideas begin to break down. When people engage in such action they become much more open to ideas of solidarity and of socialism than they are for most of the time.

This is why socialist ideas are able to have a greater impact with workers when they are in struggle than when they are passive and atomised.

In addition, even within capitalist society, many millions of people act towards one another in ways which are *not* selfish or greedy. Miners in pit disasters, workers who give to charity, nurses who work long hours for little money, all in their own way challenge the idea of a greedy and grasping society.

The point of genuine revolutionary struggle for socialism is that it not only seizes power from the capitalist class. It also is the only way in which workers can rid themselves of all the old ideas and build a new society.

Engels talked about socialism being the move from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. All the wealth created even today in the world—and much more—can be put at the disposal of the collective needs of humanity.

As this happens the material reasons for competition disappear, and so the ideas also change. Ideas based on cooperation, collective behaviour and so on become the dominant ones.

But, some people say, isn't this just a utopian pipe dream? Won't there always be someone on top? After all, the democracy of the Russian revolution ended in the dictatorship of Stalin.

Yet the defeat of the Russian revolution lay precisely in the level of relative scarcity which existed in Russia. When Lenin said that without a revolution in Germany, the Russian revolution would perish he was pointing to the low level of development of the productive forces in Russia.

The difference between human beings and animals is that humans are involved in a conscious struggle with nature. It is also a social struggle, as they work collectively to change the world. People are socially determined but act consciously to change the world: 'men make history but not in conditions of their own choosing.'

It is revolutionary struggle and eventually the socialist revolution which allows men and women to fight against the old ideas and so create a new world to live in.

"Talking With the Taxman About Poetry"

Some Myths of Socialism, human freedom and creativity

"Freedom is more than a word, more than the base coinage/Of statesmen, the tyrant's dishonoured cheque, or the dreamer's mad/Inflated currency". C. Day-Lewis' stirring poem "The Nabara" rings as true today as it did in the 1930s. Yet one of the insults apologists for liberal democracy habitually fling at socialism is that it is "against human freedom and creativity". In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

For the great majority, life under capitalism is a profoundly alienating experience. Work for most people in our society is filled with repetitive boring tasks, is undrewarding and disempowering. The supervisor's schedule or the bosses' whim control the patterns and routines of life, and, for most of us, work is a chore, a place where we feel out of control and as much a part of a process as the tills we operate, the groceries we pack or the tables we clean. Home life is invaded by this pervasive sense of hopelessness and disconnection from any sort of community. Drug abuse, domestic violence and depression statistics show that "playing happy families" is not the normal New Zealand experience.

Those people trying to live their lives as artists, as poets and as writers experience poverty, no recognition of their efforts and a constant struggle to balance earning with creation. Commercial success often involves compromises of integrity. Even those with well paid jobs they find in some aspects rewarding - lecturers, researchers, teachers and so on - find themselves alienated by capitalism.

Researchers are hampered in their efforts by government and industrial funding mood-swings, lecturers and teachers are impaired by the needs of an education system to conform to capitalist expectations before the needs of those wanting to learn. In short, apart from the tiny minority who control the wealth, all of us are alienated and hampered creatively by the system - from abjectly impoverished unemployed to reasonably affluent professors.

So where is this freedom and creativity the supporters of liberal democracy champion as an answer to the challenge of socialism? Is it the freedom to choose from a vast array of toothpaste brands? Or the creativity of an architect following exact specifications to produce yet another mansion for Kerry Packer? Or is creativity to be found flourishing where painters and poets try to live off the dole as they make works which most of society has neither the money nor the time to produce? Or is it the "loneliness which you call freedom", to borrow Billy Bragg's beautiful phrase, to be found in doing the same tasks, day after day, for most of your life?

Socialists are unashamed in admitting that they don't value the current choice in toothpastes. Nor do we feel particularly creative and liberated because the rich choose occasionally to "patronise", in every sense of that word, the arts. Capitalism suffocates the human spirit, and atrophies the artist. But we think it can, and must, be changed.

By arranging the way we work democratically, we have the power

to end alienation and boredom in the workforce. By controlling what we do (in socialist-speak we call this "controlling the means of production"), workers are involved in what they are doing - not just being cogs in a capitalist's grand machinery. More than this, if we organise economic life democratically, we don't need to do most of the exploitative tasks running people's lives at the moment. If the driving force behind our decisions is human need, and not the profit of the bosses' which we toil towards at the moment, then time free for leisure and human development increases enormously. Instead of being a way of reaching the weekend, work will become something which extends and develops our creativity.

This probably sounds like utopian dreaming to most people. But the fact remains that there are examples in history where we have had brief glimpses of this very way of running things occurring. In Paris in 1871 and 1968, in Poland in 1980 and Portugal in 1974-75 and Russia in 1917, workers and students have seized control and have run their lives along democratic lines. And, far from being the drab and dull experience bourgeois theorists of democracy claim socialism will produce, these have been some of the most exciting times for ordinary people.

Lenin called revolutions "festivals of the oppressed". During the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, a revolution in the arts occurred, with poets like Mayakovsky and the Soviet futurists completely revitalising European literature, and the

Formalists challenging the very foundations of literary criticism. Ordinary workers in factories across the country painted murals on previously sparse walls. In Paris in 1968 strikers adopted the slogan "All Power to the Imagination", and engaged in similar revolutionary artistic projects.

For us, specialisation is one of the stifling effects of capitalism. Where nowadays "amateurs" and "beginners" are dismissed scornfully by a system which views things only in terms of profit and production, socialists see the vision of a world where everyone is free to unselfconsciously experiment with dance, painting or whatever both within and outside of the workplace as an exciting one. Most of the important artistic figures of the 20th Century - from Brecht to Frieda Kahlo, from Billy Bragg to Frank Sargeson - have found this Marxist vision inspiring, too.

The liberal democrat may want to apologise for capitalism, and wax lyrical about its "rights" and "freedoms" and denounce socialism lack of "creativity". The right to miss out on the wonderful choice at the local supermarket due to a tight budget is one few people would miss. The freedom to be enslaved by the meaningless tasks assigned you completely undemocratically by some supervisor is one most people would willingly concede. The vast creativity unleashed by waiting on idiots at the flash restaurant which charges enormous prices and pays pitiful wages is hard to recognise because it simply does not exist. But the idea of a society where we arrange our own way of working, for need instead of someone else's profit, where we value each other's efforts to increase the community of art and pleasure, stands in stark contrast to the misery of the everyday. Its something we'll fight to "keep the dream floating". Workers have gained this in the past. We can again. Alone, capitalist society can seem depressing and overwhelming. Together we can change it. Its an unfashionable optimism, but one played out in the past : Together we can change the world.

Dougal McNeill

Red Words

Its a pretty depressing world we live in, and socialists recognise this. While trying to provide a clear analysis of why things are the way they are, and being realistic about how we can change it, we're also trying to offer some support and entertainment amidst the alienation and loneliness of capitalism. Feel free to contribute stories, poems and drawings to *Socialist Review* - these are red words, to inspire us, to console us and to give us hope for the fight of another day.

Ballad of the Third Boobhead

In a rackrent house not far from Aro Street

One dark morning

Four men sat with a bottle of wine at their feet,
And the rain was falling.

The first man said, "The Government's not my mother,

I worked on the boats for twenty years

And all I've got to show for hard skippers and bad weather
Is the price of five beers."

The second man said, "The screws and the magistrates

Are wearing me down,

I've been in too many boobs and too many fights
In too many towns."

Then the third man said, "I've not seen Jesus Christ,

But if he came

To earth he should either have had a gun in his fist
Or stopped the whole game."

The fourth man reached for the bottle and said nothing

But the light from the window

Showed like a graveyard lamp that his hands were shaking
And his skin was like callico.

And the third man said, "It will take more than talk

To make this a country

Where men who were treated like slaves will be able to work
For other things than money."

Then the four boobheads caught on the horns of the beast

Saw on the dark morning

Above the town like lightening in the east
The bones of Lenin shining.

— James K. Baxter

The Democratic Spirit of Socialism from Below

The *Communist Manifesto*, which was written by Marx and Engels and published way back in 1848, opened with the words 'A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism'. Of course, neither Marx nor Engels believed in ghosts, nor did the kind of communism they envisaged have anything in common with the brutal dictatorships that emerged bearing that name in Eastern Europe during the twentieth century. The basic principle of classical Marxism, considered as a political movement, was written by Marx into the preamble of the first International: 'The emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves'.

For all the classical Marxists, including Lenin, the struggle for socialism is a struggle *from below* by the mass of workers (and other oppressed groups) within society. For Marx and Engels, as well as the major figures in classical Marxism who succeeded them, socialism is a movement for the self-emancipation of the working class and that process centrally involves the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in order to establish a new form of society governed by the workers themselves. It is precisely in this sense that **socialism is 'a independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the majority'**.

Classical Marxism did not simply reject liberal democracy, rather it argued that the liberal or bourgeois form of democracy was too limited and restrictive. Socialist democracy would both incorporate key elements of liberal democracy – citizenship rights, freedom of political expression and assembly, regular multi-party elections – and ulti-



mately transcend it by democratizing the whole of society, not just the political sphere.

In this regard, the American Marxist Hal Draper is entirely correct to insist that Marx defined socialism in democratic terms and democracy in socialist terms: '**Marx's socialism (communism) as a political program may be most quickly defined, from the Marxist standpoint, as the complete democratization of society, not merely of political forms**' (*Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, vol.1, p282). And communism was the highest stage of this democratizing of society – it was the point at which society became a class-less, state-less, self-governing entity.

So what about the International Socialists?

The International Socialists have always been committed to this kind of socialism from below. Brian Roper and Laurel Hepburn, who in 1993 founded the first IS group in New Zealand, did so because they were committed to the idea that real change in society must come from below – that socialism is ultimately 'a movement of the immense majority (workers, women, Maori,

students) acting in the interests of the majority'.

It was clear that a socialist organization was desperately needed in New Zealand. The attacks on workers, Maori, Pacific Island peoples, students and women pushed through by the fourth Labour and National governments, especially the Employment Contracts Act 1991, benefit cuts in the 'Mother of All Budgets' in the same year, and the steady rise of fees and debt in education from the late 1980s onwards, all called for a fightback from the unions, from Maori, from students.

But the leadership for such a fight was not coming from the Labour or Alliance parties, it was not coming from the leadership of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, it wasn't even coming from the student unions. When it did come, it came from socialists and others on the left arguing for and organising mass protests and occupations on the campuses, and rank and file members of unions pushing for strike action.

Yet the socialist movement during the 1990s was both disorientated and demoralised by the collapse of Stalinism in 1989-91. This

Socialist Organising in Aotearoa

was because most of the socialist groups that were around in New Zealand at the time wrongly thought that these regimes were, to a greater or lesser extent, 'really existing socialism'.

For example, the former Communist Party of New Zealand, now called the 'Socialist Workers' Organization', had proclaimed the brutally repressive and poverty-stricken country of Albania to be a socialist nirvana throughout the 1980s and early 1990s! In stark contrast, the International Socialists consistently argued for 'neither Washington nor Moscow' but 'international socialism'. This meant that we did not greet the 'fall of the wall' with pessimism and despair but with a renewed hope that now the workers and oppressed of Eastern Europe could fight for real socialism, for genuine democracy.

Of course, for the overwhelming majority of workers and students such squabbles on the far left seem to have little to do with the reality of wage and benefit cuts during the 1990s. But it is important to recognise that the resulting collapse of the socialist left in New Zealand weakened the overall working class movement. Socialists have always had an impact quite disproportionate to the their (often small) numbers, something even those on the right admit. This is because it is socialists who are often the most experienced at organizing strikes, protests and campaigns.

So part of the democratic spirit of socialism from below is being clear about what socialism is, and is not. Real socialism is about the working class majority running society democratically in their own interests. It is not about one-party dictatorships, secret police, nor the 'disappearing' of dissidents.

But the democratic spirit of socialism from below is also about the nature of socialist organizing itself. Many attempts to build socialist organisations in New Zealand in the past have failed because, among other things, such organisations have been run undemocratically from the top down. They become increasingly disconnected from reality, and more and more like quasi-religious sects. Those who thought differently or who dared to challenge the leadership were quickly pushed out the door.

The International Socialists have never been like this. The 'spirit' of our organisation, understood not in the religious sense, but

in the sense of a 'vital animating force', the 'essential principles guiding thought and action', have been developed through years of political activity on the ground. They can be summarised as follows.

Our most fundamental principle is deceptively simple: you can not fight for a democratic and socialist world with an undemocratic organisation. We think that socialist organisations work best when they are thoroughly democratic, controlled and driven from the bottom up. This is our most basic principle because from it everything else follows.

Socialist organizing is about understanding what's wrong with the world, why it is like this, and how we can change it. We draw on the Marxist tradition, the experiences of workers, students, Maori and others in their struggles, as well as upon our own experiences as active socialists, to try and provide answers to these questions.

We are not frightened of admitting that we don't know it all. We have a tremendous amount to learn from the everyday experiences and ideas of our workmates, fellow students, other members of our whanau, hapu and iwi, and even from the people we run into in the pub.

We don't always get things right, but we are prepared to have a go, make mistakes and learn from them.

Marxism is not a religion – it has no gods nor popes. No Marxist, from Karl Marx or Leon Trotsky to contemporary Marxists such as Alex Callinicos or Ernest Mandel, has avoided making major political mistakes. We read what they have written, we listen to what they have to say, but we don't take it as gospel – their ideas have to stand the test of practice, they have to be further developed and applied through a 'concrete analysis of the concrete situation'. If they are to be respected, then they have also to demonstrate the kind of humility which really does indicate that they are prepared to admit to their mistakes and learn from the experiences of workers and the oppressed.

We sometimes party hard, both to escape from the alienation that we all experience, and because for us being socialists is not about being dour and boring old farts, but celebrating the best in life in so far as it gives us a tiny glimpse of what life might be like in a socialist soci-

ety.

Openness and honesty are well established hallmarks of our political practice. We don't behave like a secret society in which leading figures monopolise key information and use it to retain control over the affairs of the group. We tell people how big (or small we are), how we are organised, what plans we have for the future.

It would be stupid to get sidetracked into pointless sectarian disputes with other individuals and groups on the left. The point is to win the majority of people in this society to the idea of overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialist democracy. Arguing with tiny sects on the left is hardly going to achieve that.

The struggle for socialism is part of an international struggle – you can not build socialism in one country. A socialist revolution in one country would be doomed to fail because in isolation it would be crushed by the US and the other big capitalist powers.

But if there is ever going to be a revolution in this country it will not be imported from abroad. It will be made here, by the working class of this country. And that means that we can not simply copy ideas and analysis from overseas. We have to understand what is going on in this country. There are bound to be major similarities with the other advanced capitalist countries, but there are also important differences (for example, the struggle for tino rangatiratanga). Therefore we can not simply 'follow orders from overseas'.

Talking ain't enough. You've got to do more than 'talk the talk', you've got to walk the walk and get stuck into supporting striking workers, building student protests, protesting against senseless bloody wars and stupid meetings by 'heads of government', and so forth.

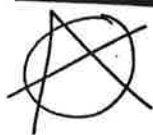
If this sounds like the kind of socialist organising that you are interested in then join the International Socialists. At present we are very small, we need to be much, much bigger in order to start to have a real impact on the struggle for a better world.

We need you, we have a lot to learn from you, and you have a lot to contribute to us. Think about it, and then join the fight for a democratic world without exploitation, oppression and alienation.

– Brian S. Roper

Many anarchists and revolutionary socialists share a similar vision about how to get there. James Hutchings, a Sydney anarchist, and

THE CASE FOR ANARCHISM



There are two kinds of revolutionary socialism: Leninism or Trotskyism, and anarchism.

Leninists believe in forming a "vanguard party", of the most "advanced" sections of the people. The idea is that the vanguard will lead the workers to revolution, and take power in their name, setting up a "workers' State", which will "wither away" over time.

But anarchists say that no one should take power. Any workers' State would turn into another tyranny, as in Russia. Instead, we should abolish inequality directly. Anarchists are against any inequality in revolutionary groups – no Branch Committees, National Secretaries etc.

Everyone should have an equal say in the group. Anarchists see revolution as being led not by a vanguard party but by the workers themselves. An anarchist's job is encouraging and helping to defend a revolution – not running it.

Some examples of anarchist-oriented groups are: the IWW (a revolutionary union), the CNT in the Spanish Revolution (still a major union bloc in Spain), and the Situationists, influential in the May '68 uprising in Paris. Today, the Mexican Zapatistas are the best-known anarchist-inspired group.

I've only got 800 words, so I'll look at the most common arguments against anarchism.

Anarchists are racist, sexist etc:

Leninists usually "prove" this by finding a quote from Bakunin or Kropotkin (major anarchist writers).

Neither Bakunin nor Kropotkin were anarchists all their life. Bakunin started out as a Slavic nationalist. So, there are heaps of quotes which "prove" that anarchists are nationalists.

Also, anarchists aren't "Bakuninists" or "Kropotkinists". Anarchist ideas come from all sorts of people (including Marx). Anarchists don't say Bakunin or Kropotkin had it all right: we agree with them on some things and not on others. People should work out their own ideas, not follow anyone – Bakunin, Marx or Trotsky.

Anarchists ignore the differences between Trotsky and Stalin:

In 1921, the workers of Kronstadt rose up against the Bolsheviks, demanding an end to the dictatorship of the Bolsheviks, freedom of speech for all revolutionary

socialists, and so on. They voted to share their rations equally (the Bolsheviks had a system of different grades of ration). Trotsky ordered the Red Army to "shoot them down like partridges". The Red Army went into battle with guns at their back, for fear that they would change sides. Trotsky and Lenin said the uprising was a Tsarist plot!

Trotsky also believed that the government should conscript people to work gangs – in *Terrorism and Communism*, he wrote that compulsory labour was "quite unquestionable". He also believed in revolutionary groups based on "the leadership's organised distrust of the members, manifesting itself in vigilant control, from above, of the party" (quoted in Deutscher's *The Prophet Armed*).

What's a revolution meant to do – free workers, or shoot them for going against a dictatorship?

Anarchism is utopian, Leninism is scientific:

This is a quote from Bakunin, made in the 1870s – "But, the Marxists say, this minority [the government of the 'workers' State] will consist of workers. Yes indeed, but of ex-workers who... cease to be workers. And from the heights of the State they begin to look down upon the whole common world of the workers. From that time on they represent not the people but themselves." (from *Statism and Anarchy*).

Isn't that what happened? It's utopian to expect a few people to have so much power and not end up with a tyranny.

Anarchism is "petty bourgeois":

Were the IWW "petty bourgeois"? What about the Spanish Revolution? It's not bourgeois to want freedom, despite Lenin's claim that "freedom is a bourgeois prejudice".

Anarchism is disorganised:

Recently, we brought out the anarchist and ex-Black Panther Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin on a speaking tour. We held all the talks scheduled, plus some extra ones, even though the government arrested, bashed, and tried to deport him. We wouldn't have been able to do that if we were disorganised.

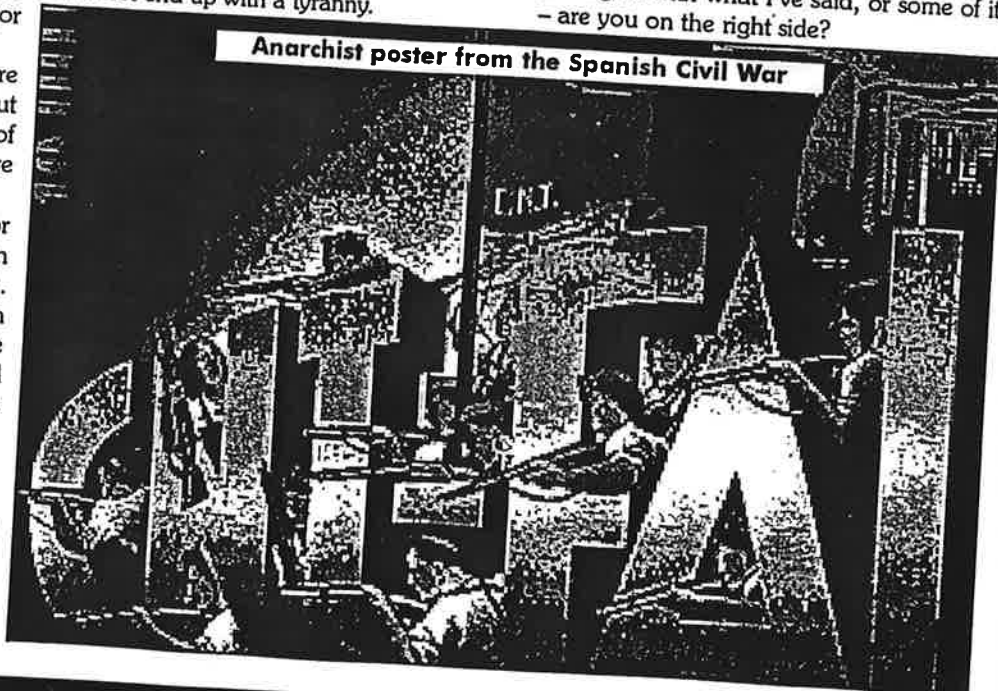
Actually, anarchist groups can be more organised. You don't get the same kind of power struggles, splits and expulsions that characterise Leninist groups.

None of us are any cleverer than any of you. We don't need a Branch Committee to organise – neither do you.

What about you? Do you think that freedom is bourgeois? Do you think that Bakunin's prediction came true? Do you find that everyone has an equal say in your group, or are there leaders and followers? Is your group open and democratic, or do they kick anyone out who questions the party line? And who sets the party line anyway? If we can organise without a National Committee, why can't you?

It doesn't matter what you call yourself – anarchist, socialist, communist or whatever. What matters is the ideas, not the labels. If you agree with what I've said, or some of it – are you on the right side?

Anarchist poster from the Spanish Civil War



what the world should be like. But we have important differences Robert Bollard from *Socialist Alternative*, debate the issues.

THE CASE FOR SOCIALISM

SA I won't take up every point that James raised in his article, but will instead try to concentrate on those which go to the heart of the difference between Marxism and Anarchism.

The Leninist argument with anarchism is not about the existence of organisation – that's inevitable – but with the type of organisation. It will probably make James angry, but the difference is all about democracy. We are democratic and anarchism isn't.

The point I'm getting at is that democracy is a restriction on freedom. Democracy involves majority rule and that inevitably means the suppression of a range of individual freedoms – not all, but some.

When workers physically stop a scab from crossing a picket line, they are suppressing the scab's freedom to go to work and are roundly condemned by the Murdoch press for doing so. Similarly, when a Leninist party decides that it's wrong to, say, support the First World War effort, then any member who did so would be expelled.

Does James object to the idea of an organisation expelling members for such an act, or for some gross offence such as rape? If he doesn't, then he has accepted the elementary principle of democratic centralism.

A small group may well be able to organise a speaking tour without this sort of discipline. In fact, we in *Socialist Alternative* don't believe that full-blown democratic centralism applies to very small groups, just as

we don't believe little groups like ours are the "vanguard" of the working class.

But we don't want to remain small, and ultimately we want to do more than organise speaking tours. We want a revolution, and that requires organisation on a mass scale, involving the most politically advanced and militant layer of the working class – cohered into a party that is capable of leading the whole of the class to victory.

Mass organisations such as the CNT (the anarchist trade union federation in Spain in the '30s) inevitably have structures – and, yes, leaders. But because in Spain those leaders were anarchists, they didn't believe in seizing power when they had the chance.

As a result, the leaders that the CNT wasn't supposed to have, (and over whom its members therefore had no control) ordered their members to dismantle the barricades in the streets of Barcelona. Reluctantly, they obeyed and were slaughtered.

As for Kronstadt, even if everything that James said about it was true (and it's not), it wouldn't matter. It would mean that the degeneration of the revolutionary leadership began earlier and affected Lenin and Trotsky. But what was the cause of that degeneration, and what was the alternative? James quotes Trotsky arguing for compulsory labour. He leaves out the fact that, in the party conference where this debate occurred (in 1921 – just after Kronstadt), Lenin argued against Trotsky and won the vote.

Russia, Lenin said, was not socialist

because socialism could not be built in one country. Instead it was "state capitalism under workers' control" and this workers' control contained "bureaucratic distortions".

He was referring to the economic collapse and devastation of the civil war, which had decimated the already small Russian working class. The revolutionary capital Petrograd had seen its population fall from two and a half million in 1917 to a few hundred thousand.

Not surprisingly the soviets (workers' councils) which were the heart of the workers' state (made up – note James – of real workers in real jobs) had ceased to function. This left the Bolshevik Party ruling on behalf of the workers.

This was a disastrous situation, as Lenin and Trotsky understood. The only solution was to spread the revolution to the advanced countries. As Lenin said in that same debate in 1921: "Without Germany we are doomed".

So what is left as James' alternative to this? He seems to think that if Lenin had had different ideas in his head he would have behaved differently. By an act of will, socialism could have been built in one country.

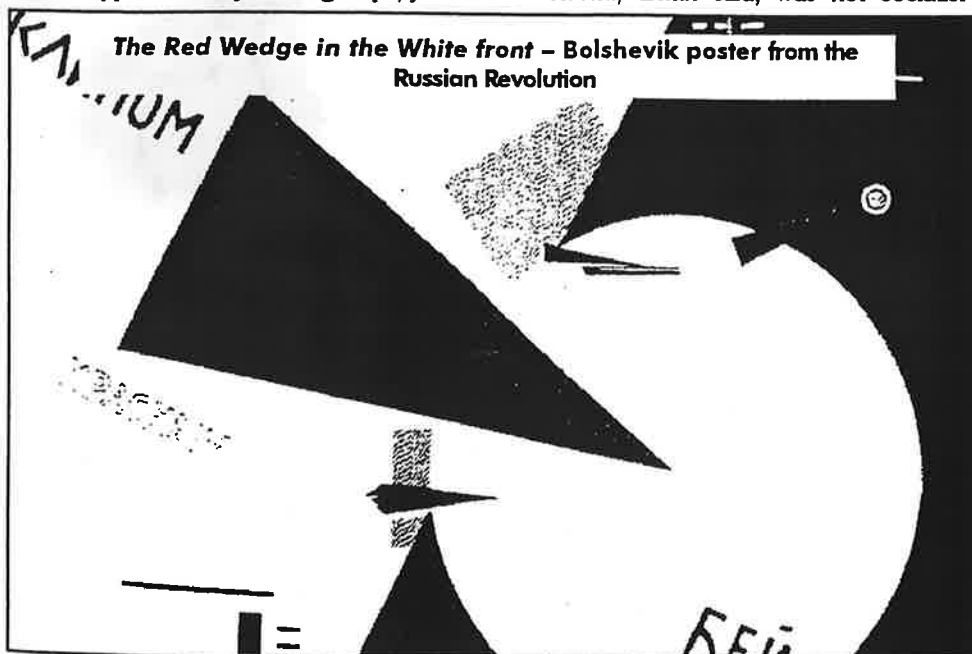
Does that sound familiar? It's what Stalin and Mao believed.

We in *Socialist Alternative* are proud to be part of the classical Marxist tradition. It means that we are "standing on the shoulders of giants". But it is nonsense to assert that we follow that tradition uncritically.

We reject for example, the homophobia displayed by Engels in his otherwise excellent writings on the oppression of women, Lenin's theory of the "labour aristocracy" and, more importantly, Trotsky's belief that Russia under Stalin was still a workers' state – albeit a "degenerated" one that needed another revolution.

But we have assessed the essence of that tradition and find its central tenets – that socialism can only come from below by workers seizing power and setting up workers' councils, that revolutionaries should be organised in a party whose leaders are democratically accountable – to remain essentially true.

And we hope that if we get the opportunity to argue for the workers to take power, we won't, like the anarchists in Spain, be afraid of the consequences.



Postmodernism is hailed on the left and the right as the cultural expression of a new epoch. *Alex Callinicos* takes issue with this view and exposes Postmodernism as a mix of rehashed ideas and plain fraud.

This year's model

POSTMODERNISM, the *New York Times* recently observed, is 'the intellectual fad of the 1980s and, so far, the 1990s.' It's hard to find any aspect of contemporary cultural life which doesn't get called 'Postmodern.'

The word is applied to so many contradictory things that it seems to lack any definite meaning. In fact Postmodernism can be seen as the convergence of three distinct elements.

The first is the reaction which has developed in the past 20 years to Modernism, the great revolution in the arts which took place at the beginning of the century.

The 'Postmodern' reaction is most obvious in a rejection of the 'International Style'—the elongated slabs which came to dominate city centres after the Second World War. 'Postmodern' architecture represented a flight from austerity to decoration, from innovation to tradition, from rationality to humour—as in the case of office blocks decorated with classical pillars.

Postmodernism involves, secondly, a specific philosophical current—what came to be known as Poststructuralism, around the group of French philosophers who came to prominence in the 1960s, notably Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.

They developed certain themes, the first and most fundamental of which was a rejection of the Enlightenment. This was the project formulated by a number of French and Scottish thinkers in the eighteenth century based on the idea that human reason could both understand and control the natural and social world, a project which Marx sought, critically, to continue.

Reason and truth, the Poststructuralists argue, are in fact illusions. Scientific theories are perspectives



Blue Velvet, claimed for Postmodernism, but distinctly Modernist

reflecting particular social interests. The will to know, as Foucault put it, is merely one form of the will to power.

Reality itself is indeed merely a chaotic collection of fragments dominated by an endless struggle for power shaping nature and society alike. And human beings, as part of this reality, lack any coherence or control over themselves. Thus Foucault saw the individual human subject as a mass of drives and desires brought together by the prevailing power relations within society.

The third ingredient of Postmodernism is the theory of postindustrial society developed by sociologists such as Daniel Bell in the early 1970s. Bell argued that the world was entering a new historical epoch in which material production would become less and less important and knowledge the main driving force of economic development.

The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard took this idea, and argued that, in the 'Postmodern condition' knowledge takes on an increasingly fragmentary form, abandoning all claims to truth or rationality.

This shift reflects what Lyotard calls 'the collapse of grand narratives.' The Enlightenment project—as continued by Hegel and Marx, who sought to offer interpretations of the whole course of historical development as a way of showing the conditions under which human emancipation could be achieved—is no longer credible after the disasters of Nazism and Stalinism.

Central to Postmodernism then is the idea of a systematic, comprehensive and very recent change. The world has entered a new social and economic epoch, accompanied by a cultural transformation—Postmodern art, and a philosophical revolution—Poststructuralism. Hence *Marxism Today's* claim that we live in 'New Times.'

None of this stands up to serious examination. But the idea that we live in a new epoch is best exposed by looking at the claim that there is a distinctively Postmodern art.

Probably the best known definition of Postmodern art is offered by the architectural historian Christopher Jencks. Postmodernism, he says, consists in 'double-coding', that is, the combination of different styles in the same artwork—of, say, classicism and the International Style in the same building.

This is a strange claim, since what Jencks calls 'double-coding' is such an obvious feature of Modernism. Thus James Joyce in *Ulysses* mingles together different voices, styles and languages—an effect captured in poetry by T S Eliot in *The Waste Land*. The idea of a distinctive Postmodern art rests on a caricature of Modernism.

The best definition of Modernism is offered by Eugene Lunin in *Marxism and Modernism*. He isolates four features. First, 'aesthetic self-consciousness': Modern art tends to be about the process of artistic creation

itself—thus Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* reconstructs the experiences which led to the decision to write the novel. Secondly, 'simultaneity, juxtaposition, or montage': Modern art breaks up the world of everyday experience and then reassembles it in new and unexpected combinations.

Thirdly, 'paradox, ambiguity, and uncertainty': Modern art presents a world which no longer has clear signposts or a visible structure. Finally, 'dehumanisation': the individual in Modern art is no longer in control of his or her own motives let alone of the world itself.

Now the odd thing is that all these features of *Modernism* are frequently claimed to be distinctive of Postmodern art. The novels of Salman Rushdie, for example, are described as Postmodern when they are in fact typical of Modernism as defined by Lunn.

It's often argued that the difference lies in the fact that Modernism was elitist and crassly optimistic while Postmodernism is populist and pessimistic in its approach. But this involves a complete misunderstanding of Modernism as a historical phenomenon.

Modernism emerged in the late 19th century especially in those countries experiencing the rapid and uneven impact of the development of industrial capitalism—Russia, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary. It can be seen as a response to the penetration of all aspects of social life by commodity relations. The general fragmentation this involved led to the isolation of art as a distinct, apparently autonomous social practice.

The result was a tendency for artists, alienated from the rest of social life, to focus on art itself, for the process of artistic creation to become the object of art. This usually involved an ironic and detached attitude to reality. Art became a refuge from a social world dominated by commodity fetishism.

This attitude was compatible with all sorts of political commitments, from the Marxism of Bertolt Brecht to the fascism of Ezra Pound. The prevailing mood was, however, the pessimism summed up by T S Eliot when he wrote in 1923 of 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy that is contemporary history.'

Modernism nevertheless contained a radical potential. Its key technical innovation was montage, the combination of distinct and apparently incompatible elements in the same work.

The Cubist collages took this to the extent of incorporating bits of the real world—fragments of wood or



Modernist montages used the devices now said to be distinctive of Postmodernism

newspaper—in their paintings. Art ceased to be a window on the world and became, potentially at least, part of the world. The implication was to break down the separation of art and social life which had given rise to Modernism in the first place.

This potential became self-conscious in the avant-garde movements which emerged at the end of the First World War—Dada, Surrealism, Constructivism. Their aim was to subvert art as an autonomous institution as part of the more general struggle to revolutionise society.

'Dada is German Bolshevism,' said Richard Huelsenbeck. Or, as André Breton, Surrealist poet and philosopher, put it in 1935: "'Transform the world", Marx said; "change life", Rimbaud [the French poet] said, "these two watchwords are for us one and the same."

This linking together of social and artistic revolution was made possible by specific historical circumstances. It was in the period of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of 1918-23 that the avant-garde movements flourished. The Russian Constructivists in particular—Mayakovsky, Eisenstein, Rodchenko, Tatlin and many others—put their art at the service not just of revolutionary propaganda, but of the transformation of everyday life.

The defeat of first the German and then the Russian Revolutions therefore undercut the base of the avant-garde. Fascism and Stalinism destroyed them, not merely through repression, but through removing the hopes of social revolution on which the realisation of the avant-garde project depended.

The conditions for the incorporation of Modernism by capitalism since the

Second World War was thus created.

The International Style which came to fill the urban skyline after 1945 was developed by architects such as Mies van der Rohe, last director of the Bauhaus, which was set up after the 1918 German Revolution to build 'Cathedrals of Socialism.'

The developments in various arts over the past twenty years which have come to be known as Postmodernism have little in common beyond a reaction to the incorporated 'Late Modernism' which became the dominant cultural style after the Second World War.

They are better seen as variants of Modernism than a break with it. There is, for example, nothing in David Lynch's brilliant film *Blue Velvet*, with its powerful sense of an irrational world of violence and desire lurking beneath the banal surface of everyday life, which would have come as a surprise to the Surrealists.

Just as there is no distinctively Postmodern art, nor are we living in a new historical epoch. The most serious attempts to make out the latter claim tend to focus on the internationalisation of capital.

But while capital has undoubtedly become much more globally integrated over the past 20 years, the nation state continues to play a vital economic role. Witness, for example, the American government's rescues first of the banking system and now the savings and loans industry. Moreover, the internationalisation of capital does not signal a new, stable phase of capitalist expansion; it has rather been a major factor in making the world economy more unstable since the late 1960s.

Granted that the claims of Postmodernism are false, where does

it come from? Why has the widespread belief emerged that we live in a fundamentally new economic and cultural epoch?

The recovery of the advanced capitalist economies from the world recession of 1979-82, involved an expansion of demand, based on easy credit and higher government spending, which began in the US in the early 1980s and spread to Europe.

Among the main beneficiaries of this recovery were the 'new middle class' of highly paid managers and professionals. The 1980s were the decade when the Yuppie flourished.

Secondly, however, many of the new middle class which did so well out of the recovery were part of the generation of 1968.

They had participated in the huge radicalisation of young intellectuals throughout the Western world during the great upturn in class struggle of the late 1960s and early 1970s. And they had also shared in the collapse of revolutionary hopes which took place in the mid and late 1970s as workers were pushed back onto the defensive and much of the far left disintegrated.

The result was the emergence of a substantial social layer that is both economically prosperous and politically disillusioned. They don't believe in revolution any more (if they ever did), but they don't have an unqualified faith in capitalism either.

This attitude is well summed up by Lyotard's declaration of the bankruptcy of all 'grand narratives': we can no longer believe in any comprehensive theory which will allow us both to interpret and to change the world.

More than that, Postmodernism involves a 'routinisation of irony.' The ironic, detached attitude towards reality which was the property of a small number of highly sophisticated intellectuals when Modernism emerged

at the end of the nineteenth century now becomes generally available, mass produced as a way of coping with a world which, Postmodernists believe, can be neither transformed nor uncritically endorsed.

This is connected to the self-conscious adoption of an aesthetic attitude to life. Nietzsche argued that the only appropriate response to a chaotic reality was to make a work of art of one's own life, to seek to integrate all one's experiences into a meaningful whole.

This was an idea taken up by Foucault in his last writings, where he often talks of an 'aesthetics of existence.' This too became a routine part of middle-class life in the 1980s, in particular in the effort through diet, dress, and exercise to transform the body into a sign of youth, health, mobility.

The politics of Postmodernism is best brought out by the fashionable American philosopher Richard Rorty. Rorty welcomes the emergence of an 'increasingly ironist culture' dominated by 'the pursuit of private perfection.'

We should stop worrying about knowing and changing the world and concentrate on cultivating personal relationships.

Central to Postmodernism is the denial that it is desirable or even possible any more to engage collectively to transform the world.

How on earth Rorty and Lyotard can explain how the peoples of Eastern Europe got it together to overthrow their rulers is anybody's guess.

These revolutions and events of recent months suggest that a new chapter in the 'grand narrative' of human emancipation has just been opened. As this story unfolds, Postmodernism will become more obviously irrelevant. In the meantime revolutionary socialists must denounce it as the abomination that it is.

women's liberation - continued from p.9...

women around the world who wanted to change the foundations of the system which oppressed them. The women's movement failed to achieve that task. The words of Clara Zetkin, the German socialist who originally proposed the idea of an international women's day in 1910, have never been truer: "We can conquer the future only if we win women as a class of fighters".

notes - continued from p.15...

and P. Dalziel (eds), 1992; J. Boston, P. Dalziel, and S. St John (eds), 1999; S. Chatterjee, et al., *The New Politics: A Third Way For New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1999; B. Easton, 1997 and 1999.

²⁷ B. Jesson, *Only Their Purpose Is Mad: The Money Men Take Over New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1999, pp.203-21; J. Kelsey, 1997, pp.348-71 and *Reclaiming the Future: New Zealand and the Global Economy*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1999, pp.353-85.

²⁸ J. Kelsey, 1999, p.385.

²⁹ A. Callinicos, 'What Will Socialism Be Like?' in *Socialist Review*, Jan. 1993, pp. 18-20 and 'Socialism and Democracy' in D. Held (ed.), *Prospects for Democracy*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 200-13.; N. Geras, *Literature of Revolution*, Verso, London, 1986, pp.133-41; J. Molyneux, *Arguments for Revolutionary Socialism*, 2nd edn, Bookmarks, London, 1991, pp.18-20; 34-7; 46-7; 80-1; 119-25.

Immigration -continued from p.20...

oppression of Maori is racism and governmental betrayals, not some numbers game.

Socialists approach the question of immigration from the standpoint of the vast majority of working people around the world, whose interests are best served by the free movement of workers around the world. Not only does this enable workers to gain the best price for their labour power, it also increases the international experience of our class, breaks down the false national barriers which divide us, and helps build unity in our common struggle. For socialists, its simple - so-called foreigners are welcome here, and ruling class "Kiwi" racists are not.

I am grateful to Stewart Gardiner, whose work on immigration I have used extensively in this article



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